THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL ACTION

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH AND ITS RELATION TO CHRISTIAN SOCIAL STRATEGY IN CHARLES G. FINNEY, HORACE BUSHNELL, AND WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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DIGEST

This study begins with a discussion of the issues involved in the idea of the church and in Christian social strategy. The problem is conceived in the context of the tendency toward anthropocentric moralism which can be observed in New England Congregationalism during the past three centuries.

Changes in conception of the process of salvation in the background of the idea of the church during the nineteenth century are indicated by an analysis of three major leaders of this church's thought and action. Charles G. Finney saw the process as a radical change made by the will of the individual during a moment of crisis in a conversion experience and a second change to perfection in a similar moment of experience. Horace Bushnell emphasized the continuity of the process in a gradual development of faith through the participation of the will of the child in that of the parent in the organic family unit within the church. Washington Gladden interpreted the process as recognition of sacrificial love as the natural law of life taught by Christ and voluntary self-dedication to loving action.

Finney paid little attention to the church, and regarded it as a voluntary association of individuals dedicated to conducting revivals and acting in disinterested benevolence. Bushnell asserted the organic unity of the church as a body ruled by the will of Christ, drawing the whole human race into itself. Gladden saw the church as a voluntary fellowship united by love and friendship through which it overcomes social divisions, thus serving the Kingdom of God on earth, of which it is a subsidiary organ.

Finney's social strategy centered in voluntary societies for social reform, reflecting the same assumptions of individualistic moralism in constitution and mode of operation as did his church. Bushnell centered social strategy in the unconscious impact of Christian life and character through the organic interrelationship of the wills of men in the church. Gladden's social strategy centered in the integrating power of love in the working fellowship of the church, and relied upon rational argument and sentimental moral suasion to recruit men for the effort and provide discipline.

These men are criticized for departing from Biblical standards of faith, for centering their theology in loosely-defined religious experience, and for their understanding of sin in exclusively moral terms. Finney and Gladden are criticized for weakening the church and social action by their lack of adequate definitions of authority in church-order and in the instruments of social action and exclusive reliance upon individual persuasion to reform the church and transform society. Finney's subordination of social reform to salvation is appreciated, as is Gladden's subordination of the church to the Kingdom of God, while Gladden's accomodation of the Kingdom to cultural ideals is criticized. Bushnell's idea of the church as an organic unity and his relation of social strategy to church-life is defended, as is his recognition of involuntary ways of exerting Christian influence in a vocational context. He is criticized for basing this upon natural law instead of the power of the Word of God to call forth faith and to maintain it. A suggestion is made for a view of the church as a witnessing and worshipping community of faith gathered by the Word. The study ends with a call for an interpretation of Christian action as witness and worship in response to a context in life which confronts the Christian with the claims of both the Word and his culture.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To speak the name of the Christian church in the same breath with the word society is to call to mind a host of urgent contemporary problems. The purpose of this study is to shed some small light upon one of them which is still virtually untouched: How has the thinking of Christians about the nature and role of the church on earth been related to the strategies which they have devised for changing the values and structures of society? In order to bring our present inquiry within manageable limits we have confined it to the developing patterns of thought and action during the nineteenth century within a particular American theological family. The family selected is of New England Calvinist descent. Its members undertook a particularly large number of efforts at social reform on the basis of their Christian convictions.

A critical and constructive discussion of the historical relationships presented in Parts II-IV of the study will be found in Part V. This chapter presents, first, a preliminary discussion of the meaning of the terms " idea of the church" and "Christian social strategy" as they have been used in this study. Secondly, we specify what such a limited case-study of their relationship may be expected to establish. This is a study of certain changing relationships between ec-

clesiology and Christian social ethics in a historical context rather than a research project in church history in the specialized sense. A further explanation must therefore be offered for singling out for this purpose the particular stream of nineteenth-century theology and social action represented by Charles G. Finney, Horace Bushnell and Washington Gladden. Next, a brief description is given of the method of inquiry which has been followed in this study and of the order of presentation adopted. Chapter II presents a brief sketch of the historical background out of which our nineteenth-century stream of ideas came. Our purpose there is to summarize the conceptions of the process of salvation and related thinking about the church and society in this background only as it relates to the nineteenth-century development.

Toward a Definition of Terms

The Idea of the Church

The rediscovery of the church. In recent years the doctrine of the church has come increasingly to the fore in theology. The reasons for this trend are many, but among them the marked neglect of that doctrine during the nineteenth-century must be accounted one of the most important. The renewal of the theologian's interest in the church is currently paralleled by a resurgence of appreciation by laymen and pastors of the practical importance of the church to Christian life -- albeit undergirded by mixed degrees of understanding.

Interest has also been awakened in the contemporary significance of the fact and the theory of the church for an understanding of the Christian ethic. There has been little systematic exploration of this matter as yet. Several general insights may be drawn from current ecumenical discussion about the church which have special significance for the areas of Christian theology and ethics with which this study is concerned.[1]

It is significant that the beginnings of the ecumenical movement itself grew, in large part at least, out of very concrete practical problems which beset the Christian life in the world. The institutional and doctrinal disunity of the churches had compounded the problem of their witness to the one gospel of Jesus Christ in an increasingly secularized world. The participants in the early ecumenical conferences had learned by bitter experience that the impact of such a world challenges the relevance of the gospel preached by the churches in their division. All too often the vitality of the Christian life and the propagation of the faith has been impaired through the patent invasion of the world's unbridled compartmentalizations and antagonistic competition into the

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1. See P. A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel (Cornell University Press, 1956). Carter gives considerable attention to the relation of the ecumenical movement to present day social action. He sees the attention given to faith and order in the church by contemporary descendents of the social gospel as a primary feature differentiating them from the older social gospel movement.

church's own internal life. The achievement of a greater coordination and the expression of an underlying unity in the life and work of Christians throughout the world was thus seen to be imperative.[1]

To work toward such unity, however its particulars might be conceived, required raising the question of the relationship of our present churches to the one church of Jesus Christ and its brokenness. It was found that real differences in understanding of the nature of the church separated the churches. A concerted attempt to distinguish the essential constituting features of the church from its incidental features in various historical and cultural settings was eventually recognized as imperative.[2] Considerable progress has been made in identifying the main lines demarking the primary differing groups of churches. But greater agreement than this on the nature of the church is still an essential prerequisite to any further functional unity across these lines than has so far been achieved. Each primary group locates the line between constitutive and incidental characteristics of the church in a different manner, and therein lies the primary present stalemate. What is functionally determined in one group's view is a dogmatic standard to another group.[2]

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1. See Clarence Tucker Craig, The One Church in the Light of the New Testament (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), pp. 9-19.

2. See Clarence T. Craig, "The Report of the American Theological Committee," The Nature of the Church, Papers Presented to the Theological Commission Appointed by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, ed. by R. Newton Flew (London: SCM Press, 1951), chap. iii, pp. 30-38.

In the meantime there is ever greater reason to question the authenticity and vitality of much of the Christian life and witness in the face of contemporary movements within the world's cultures and the trends of modern society, and even more reason to question its wisdom. The question of the nature of the church must, therefore, be regarded as strategically important to the vital continuance of that Christian life in the world which is the special focus of attention for the student of Christian ethics. If the church is to be of any strategic importance at all, however, it must first of all be the church and not something else. It must be sought first because of the importance of the faith and the gospel for which it exists.

The writer believes that the church as such should be consciously concerned for the welfare of men in society at large. He believes that church institutions and teachings ought themselves at times to be employed by churchmen as instruments of a criticism and revision of social structure to that end. There is an impressive -- although by no means total -- consensus supporting that position among the ecumenical leadership of the churches. This is attested by the fact that agreement upon principles implying or stating such a position in the reports of the World Council of Churches in the area of Life and Work has far outdistanced any agreement upon theological and ecclesiological principles in the

area of Faith and Order. But this consensus also reflects a new alertness to the danger of identifying the church itself with proximate goals of social welfare or specific social programs. There is a keen awareness that these legitimate concerns must be approached from the perspective of a salvation which transcends them and must not be allowed to replace or obscure the church's one true center which is Jesus Christ.[1] Consensus is conspicuously lacking, however, when churchmen attempt to specify this more closely. They disagree on the way in which the church's center is to be related to the kinds of direct and indirect social action which are appropriate for the church as such to undertake, whether the channels of action be internal or external to its own membership. There we return to matters involving the unresolved differences over the nature of the church.

A working definition of the idea of the church. Our concern in this study is to discern and characterize the idea of the church only within one segment of American Christianity, and that only in its nineteenth-century development. Yet the idea of the church itself must be defined in terms broad enough to admit in so far as possible the variety of content given to the idea by thinkers in the full range of

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1. See World Council of Churches, The Church, Report of a Theological Commission on Faith and Order (London: SCM Press, 1951), chap. iii, pp. 30-38.

traditions within authentic Christianity since its inception. It must also cover both highly developed ideas and rudimentary ones, the grossly inadequate as well as the great conceptions. Our usage of the term here does not refer to the church as an idea in the mind of God. It refers to the normative idea in the mind of any given Christian thinker as he seeks to apprehend the divine idea of the church in the light of the church's present actuality.

The idea of the church stems fundamentally from a thinker's conception of the process by which the Christian believer is related to God in salvation. In being related to God, believers are related to one another in the church. A community of men must have form and order. Thus an idea of the church necessarily involves a concrete conception of what we shall call church-order. Purely functional considerations are sometimes assumed to be the only factors determining internal polity and often the role of the church in a particular society as well. This study assumes that both polity and role are functionally relative to some degree, but that neither can be understood apart from basic theological presuppositions which also enter into their determination importantly. The term church-order will be construed to include both polity and its theological presuppositions, and to bear a close relationship to the role of the church in society.[1]

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1. See James M. Gustafson, "A Study in the Problem of Authority in Congregational Church-Order" (Unpublished paper, Yale Divinity School), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

The idea of the church is a description of the actual church in this world as it is when it is true to its own nature as understood by the holder of the idea. An ideal or norm must be drawn in reference to empirical knowledge of the present actuality of the church if it is to provide a relevant standard by which to measure and criticize that actuality.

The formal definition offered above does not take on full significance until it is filled with specific content, for we cannot have an idea without content. Yet neither the past nor the present actuality of the church can supply us with one such specification without prejudicing our definition against one or more of the views of the nature of the church held by the three primary present groups of churches.

Here the fruits of the ecumenical discussions of the nature of the church can help us. They reveal three primary motifs which may be taken as basic to the three general specifications of the content we require as made by these three groups.[1] Each motif contains a distinctive emphasis concern-

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1. See James Edward Lesslie Newbiggin, The Household of God (Friendship Press, 1954), wherein a typology somewhat different from that used here is developed. Newbiggin distinguishes three answers to the question, "By what is the Church constituted?" These, which he calls the "Protestant," "Catholic" and "Pentecostal" answers, correspond in some respects to the three motifs set forth below, in that order. His third motif particularly differs from our third ideal-type. Bishop Newbiggin emphasizes that all three must be "understood in a perspective which is both missionary and eschatological,-- the perspective of the end of the world and the ends of the earth." His names for these three motifs may suggest too exclusive an identification of each with only those groups claiming the name, although this is not his intention.

ing the process of salvation about which the idea of the church tends to center when it is employed. None of the three is theoretically exclusive of the others. All three motifs can be found within the actual churches of each of the three groups; yet in the major tradition of each group the predominance of one motif tends to control the ways in which the other two are included and to subordinate them to itself.

We, therefore, cannot complete our definition of the idea of the church by simply including all three of these motifs in equal measure any more than by excluding one or more. We can complete the definition in a provisional way, however, by describing each motif and treating the three as ideal-types. These will be employed primarily as heuristic constructs for the understanding of any given idea of the church. We can thus respect the concreteness of the individual idea while illuminating its particularity in terms of its deviation from one of the ideal-types and the degree to which it reflects features of one or more of the other two. This procedure follows in general the ideal-typical method developed by Max Weber.[1]

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1. For a general account of this methodological orientation see Max Weber, Methodology of the Social Sciences (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949) pp. 89-104, and "The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology" in M. Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947) Part I, pp. 324-423. Also, M. Weber, From Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946) pp. 196-264.

The first motif centers about the witnessing and worshiping community of faith. Faith here means something deeper than assent to a proposition. It is more akin to the venture of trust which characterizes an encounter with a person than to belief. This interpretation accords with the Reformers' recovery of the Pauline and Augustinian understanding of faith. Faith is constituted by the saving Word of God. The Word is spoken "from faith to faith," calling forth the faith to which it is addressed and apart from which it cannot be heard. Viewing the process of salvation from this perspective, the church is seen as the gathered congregation. It is drawn together by faith to proclaim and to listen to the saving and sustaining Word. Preaching and the sacraments are inseparable. For the speaking and hearing of the Word is the basis of all that the church is and does, including its ministry and its sacraments.

The second motif centers about the sacramental fellowship which enjoys a metaphysical participation in the organic body of Christ. The sacraments are the peculiarly efficacious channel and vehicle of the saving grace of God. It is by virtue of man's possession and use of the sacraments instituted by Christ that the body of Christ continues to be present in history as the extension of the Incarnation. On the basis of this interpretation of the process of salvation, the church does not consist in its members and their faith, but in the whole body of Christ. The essence of the church is a ministry

and sacraments which are formally as well as spiritually continuous with those instituted by God in Christ. Such a valid ministry and valid sacraments constitute the church. Membership tends to be inclusive, bringing men into the realm of sacramental grace where they may be saved.

Our third, and final, motif centers in the actualization of a koinonia or community of love (agape). In such a community, the apprehension of the love and forgiveness of God in Christ is expected to produce a real and discernible transformation of the texture of interpersonal relationships. This differentiates the life of the brotherhood visibly from the life of the world. On the basis of this approach to the process of salvation, the church tends to be closely identified with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom already is present in the loving community. It may be conceived as already fully actualized within this limited compass of mankind, or it may be regarded as present as a real and transforming foretaste of final perfection. The church essentially consists of the community of those whose citizenship is already in the Kingdom of God. Membership in the church thus tends to be kept exclusive through the application of ethical standards. If the koinonia holds to a sectarian form of organization tight discipline is exercised on the basis of stated standards, often supported by use of the ban. Informal standards of personal affinity tend to operate toward exclusion in the case of a cultic form of organ-

ization. In either case full acceptance and inclusion into the community is granted on the basis of evidence of a transformed personal life.[1]

The three types and our three ideas of the church in nineteenth-century American Congregationalism. The idea of the church in the particular theological movement led by Finney, Bushnell and Gladden unmistakably reflects its descent from the New England Puritan tradition. Puritanism had strongly retained the Word-centered view of the church of Calvinism, but had emphasized aspects of the third motif far more than earlier Calvinist traditions had. By virtue of the Puritan heritage some of the nineteenth-century tendency to deviate from the first church-motif toward the third may be understood and described. Yet our three men depart strongly from this common basis in individual ways.

The real centrality of the first ideal-type in our three nineteenth-century ideas of the church is open to some question in each case. The variations amount to much more than minor deviations within that basic type. The problem is complicated by the continued attachment to the Word-

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1. The writer is indebted for the initial suggestion of these motifs to the members of a seminar on the nature of the church at the Yale Divinity School in 1953, and especially to some suggestions by Professor Claude Welch. The author takes responsibility for any errors in the way in which the typology and relationships have been developed here.

centered heritage after its substance has been partly relinquished. The idea centers also about the third type in the cases represented by Finney and Gladden. The idea inclines very heavily toward the second type in the development represented by Bushnell. Gladden also emphasized the Bushnellian themes of the second type.

To account for these differences we must bring in the factor of individualistic presuppositions as well as our three ideal-types of the church. None of our three ideal-types is itself individualistic. That assumption is rightly excluded from our typology because its presence in any considerable strength vitiates any serious view of the church. The third type and, even more, the first type are more open to perversion through the individualistic aberration than the second. The first and third motifs both heavily accent the category of personhood and the relations of persons in the process of salvation. The second type is most open to the opposite perversion of the submerging of personhood in a larger, impersonal organismic entity. Its emphasis upon the objective presence and the institutionalization of grace can easily eclipse the need for the individual appropriation of grace through faith.

Important differences in approach to the church among our three focal figures are illuminated when we note the potentiality for individualism in the ideal-type toward which

each man's idea of the church gravitated in its departure from the Puritan centrality of the first type. Important ecclesiological and soteriological modifications of Puritanism had taken place throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To a review of these we shall return in the next chapter. To that now rampant trend each of our principal nineteenth-century figures added his own strong acceptance or rejection of certain individualistic presuppositions which pervaded the nineteenth-century climate of thought.

The view of the church inherited by Charles G. Finney and the "New School" evangelists was still Word-centered in conception despite the considerable evisceration of the basis for that conception. This heritage had already moved farther from our first ideal-type toward the third type than had original Puritanism in its modification of Calvinism. The whole history of the Puritan decline includes a death-struggle with a series of incipient individualistic deviations from the first type. Under these tendencies toward constructing a world-view on individual-moralistic lines, the waning of subjective apprehension of faith seemed to imply an inadmissible deficiency in the power or the presence of the Word itself.[1] But the Finney evangelists in the nineteenth-century were

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1. See Alan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 40.

themselves influenced by an even deeper individualism than previous periods had known. These men thus responded to the slump in religious experiences by inclining the process of salvation and the idea of the church even further toward the third type.

The faith central to the first type was re-interpreted in such a way as to accentuate intellectual and emotional conviction of guilt and forgiveness. Regeneration must be certified by devotion to benevolent activity, as in the third type. Both of these characteristics of the process of salvation were more reliably responsive to the techniques of the Finneyite evangelists and more positively identifiable than it is ever possible for faith to be under the Pauline concept. The strong individualism of these evangelists as well as their heritage of Puritan anti-Romanism precluded movement toward the second type. Their individualism also loosened their sense of the authority of tradition and Scripture. These, had they been stronger, might have led to the recovery of a purer reflection of the first motif. A genuine sense of community can be recovered by a rediscovery of that basis, as Karl Barth's theological development shows in the twentieth-century.

Horace Bushnell faced the same cultural and religious situation as the Finney evangelists but he reacted vigorously against the individualism which he considered to be the primary root of the whole problem. Bushnell retained some

real emphasis upon the features of the third motif but tended to push them out of the center of the present church into the future, where he expected the church to develop into a closer approximation of the Kingdom of Heaven. For the center of his idea of the church he appropriated and strongly emphasized the organic features of the second motif as a means of counteracting individualism. Bushnell used the metaphor of the body of Christ most frequently as appropriate to the nature of the church. But the organismic theme was not the only center of his idea of the church. His anti-Romanism prevented the abandoning of fundamental orientation toward the first motif because he could not accept the sacramental views of the second motif even in their mildest forms. He was self-admittedly incapable of understanding them. He eventually recovered a somewhat fuller appreciation of the meaning of faith according to the first motif than he had in his theology during the first half of his career. But his church remained an ellipse with two focii.

Washington Gladden and his fellow advocates of the early Social Gospel belonged to "The New Theology" or "Progressive Orthodoxy." This school was influenced by German thought, but had strong native roots in the Bushnellian tradition as well. Gladden pressed the organic terminology of the second motif into service in his continued battle against individualism. The orientation of members of this school toward the

first motif was now somewhat more formal than real, but this formal allegiance prevented full movement to the second motif. The second motif we would naturally expect to be congenial to Episcopalians but Phillips Brooks, who shared much of "The New Theology," gave surprisingly little emphasis to it compared with preaching. Much more important than a Puritan heritage of anti-Romanism was the fact that these men themselves held unrecognized individualistic presuppositions. This individualism was a kind flowing naturally from infatuation with the power of the knowing individual to control nature and society through science.

The concern of these men for social unity in justice and love thus inclined them strongly toward the third motif, as the passion for fostering conversions had inclined Finney and his followers to deviate in the same direction. The achievement of genuine community is stressed in the third type, presenting an attractive foil to overt individualism. Its voluntaristic emphasis makes it a less powerful antidote for implicit individualism than the second motif, however. The dominating presence of the third motif in Gladden's thought led to unresolved contradictions with his emphatic formal affirmation of organic themes from Bushnell's thought. The result was an agglomeration of all three types. The solidaristic terms applied to the church's nature became relatively formal and sterile since their meaning actually referred to

the koinonia of the third type. The center of the idea of the church was transferred to the third type as far as it is possible to do without leaving allegiance to the first type behind.

The lack of theological clarity at the center of this idea of the church opened the church to the danger of becoming simply a society for social reform as time went on and the evangelical heritage became more distant. The distribution of emphasis among all three motifs might have been highly constructive had it followed a truly consistent rationale rather than being essentially ecclectic.[1]

Christian Social Strategy

A working definition of Christian social strategy. We shall use the term Christian social strategy to indicate a plan which relates the social action of a number of individual Christians in some coherent pattern. A strategy must be intentional. The intent in this case is to produce or assist a desired change in the values and/or structure of the general society or some portion of it.

Strategy anticipates some definite course of action. It does not stop with the formulation and evaluation of so-

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1. The foregoing observations concerning the views of Finney, Gladden and Bushnell are intended as a general indication of the manner in which the three types defined above are reflected there. These themes will be documented as we develop them in subsequent chapters.

cial ideas, although it implies deliberation and aforethought. It also suggests planning for a sustained engagement with culture and not just tactics for a particular social skirmish. The strategist needs to estimate the probable action of opponents and by-standers as well as that of those attempting to execute the strategy. Non-Christians may or may not be enlisted with Christians in some form of joint action toward ends upon which they can agree. In the three cases with which we are concerned the strategy is ultimately aimed at the whole world of mankind. Thus the principles of action and the social roles of all sorts and conditions of men must be considered. Finally, the term strategy implies a certain amount of militancy. A strategy inevitably requires organization of effort and thus some form of discipline. It also requires the use of one or another sort of force or power, although not necessarily physical.

The strategies of Christians and the divine strategy. It is difficult to specify what differentiates a Christian social strategy from any other kind. We cannot do so on the basis of the formal characteristics of the strategy itself. To do this would be to identify one such form with the church and with the Christian faith itself and would require us to deny the name Christian to anyone who pursued a different form of strategy or no comprehensive strategy at all. On the other hand, we wish to restrict the term to those stra-

tegies which are intrinsically related to the Christian faith of their proponents. We cannot automatically include every social strategy propounded by a thinker who happens to regard himself as a Christian.

We may cite two particularly important reasons why there can be no one social strategy which is the Christian strategy even for a given social and historical setting let alone for all of them. One of these reasons concerns limitations of knowledge. The determination of any concrete course of action involves judgements about many imponderables. It requires estimating the responses of human beings and the exercise of technical judgements which may require specialized knowledge.[1] Furthermore, the interpretation of facts enters materially into the nature of the situation within which theological and ethical principles must be employed. Two Christians, even though acting at the same place and time and referring to the same principles, may devise different strategies because they are actually addressing themselves to two different situations.

Secondly, if a Christian has misinterpreted his situation or erred in his technical judgement his strategy will

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1. One of the best short expositions of this point in print is undertaken by William Temple, Christianity and Social Order (New York: Penguin Books, 1943).

probably fail. In addition it may even be tragically mischievous. Yet we cannot say on those grounds alone that it was not a product of genuine faith.[1]

Instead of one Christian strategy there are many -- devised by men who seek in this way to witness in society to the one gospel of Jesus Christ. That which makes them Christian strategies is not their conformity to an ideal Christian pattern. It is the fact that they are motivated by the Christian faith of their proponents and that they are shaped by that faith, albeit in different ways. That one's own strategy or that of another is a Christian strategy in this sense must always remain a matter of faith rather than positive knowledge.

Our faith is in one God who acts in the present and past events of human history, and most decisively in the living Christ. We may well affirm that there is ultimately one great strategy articulated by God for the redemption of man and of history. The Incarnation may serve to illuminate and undergird the relevance of that ultimate strategy to the events and issues of every here and now.

We may even dare in faith to believe that the divine strategy is capable of comprehending all of the conflicting particular strategies of the faithful and the unfaithful in society and of using them to its own ends, giving each a place

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1. Ibid.

in the working out of that larger strategy. We are not thereby relieved of the obligation to oppose ill-conceived Christian strategies, and to press our own with the strength we have been given once we have worked them out prayerfully and with our best wisdom. Even then we must continue to seek God's judgement and the sincere criticism of men. We need not confuse our human strategies with the divine strategy in order to pursue them with both vigor and humility, in the name of loyalty to God in Christ.

The formation of a Christian social strategy is based in part upon judgements which cannot be derived from theological criteria. It must also be based upon a conception of the process of salvation if it is to answer our definition. The attempt to suggest the kind of content which may be given to a Christian social strategy thus confronts us once again with the problem of doing justice to the variety of assumptions about the process of salvation. In addition it must respect the variety of assumptions held by Christians about the nature and function of human society. Once again an ideal-typical approach offers perhaps the best method.

Such a typology was pioneered by Ernst Troeltsch, using two basic ideal-types which he called church and sect. Each of these involves a conception of the nature and role of the church in society as its center.[1] An improvement upon certain

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1. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1939) pp. 331-343.

aspects of this typology has been developed by Richard Niebuhr in his delineation of five ways of relating Christ to culture.[1] The use of only two basic types by Troeltsch inhibits their relevance to the full variety of major historic church traditions and individual thinkers.[2]

The relation of Christ to the process of salvation and of culture to the nature and function of society in each of these five types is made quite clear. Niebuhr's discussion of these types will serve to suggest the main diversities of direction taken by Christian social strategies without further elaboration here. The main characteristics of the three strategies with which we deal in this study fall clearly under the transforming type to which the various offspring of Calvinism have usually been so strongly attracted in history. They do reflect several of the other types as well, including tenden-

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1. H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).

2. The names given by Niebuhr to his five types are quite descriptive. The "Christ against culture" type tends to respond to the irresoluble tension between the two by internal or external withdrawal from "the world." At the opposite end of the spectrum, "the Christ of culture" is an accomodation of Christ to the mold of cultural hero-ideals. Christ rather than culture provides the principle for a hierarchical synthesis of grace and the natural order in the "Christ above culture" pattern as one of the three median types. Another is "Christ and culture in paradox," which insists upon a radical transformation of culture but does not believe it to be possible in this life. The final type, "Christ the transformer of culture," seeks a real transformation of culture in this life through the power of the gospel.

cies toward "culture Christianity." Only the paradoxical motif seems to be wholly absent from all three.

Only those Christians who regard Christ as the transformer of culture possess a theological rationale for a strategy whose aim is to effect a radical change in social structures and values. That requires the assumption that structures and values as well as individual men must and can be converted. The influence of the other four motifs of the Christ-culture relationship upon adherants to this basic type is explicitly examined by Niebuhr in Christ and Culture[1], and the reader is referred to that discussion.

The significance of strategy. The relationship of the idea of the church to the process of salvation itself seems to be sufficiently close to make some sort of idea of the church inevitable for any thinking Christian. The same seems to be true of ideas of the Christ-culture relationship. An examination of the varieties of the latter suggests immediately that a social strategy is by no means inevitable to Christian faith and thought, although some form of serious social concern and some relationship to society is. Where such strategies have been formulated and their execution attempted their study can be more illuminating than that of social ideas alone for several reasons.

In the first place, differences among Christians in ethical and theological assumptions show up with a singular clarity when put to the test of embodiment in a concrete course of action. A course of action once undertaken is by its very nature exclusive of other courses. Often a different course would better express certain of these assumptions, but at the expense of the assumptions which are actually ranked highest in importance. The pluralism of the Christian ethic is thus revealed most sharply at the level of thought which is to be so enacted.

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1. H. R. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, Chap. vi, also Chap. vii.

One important caution should be entered in this connection. The importance of contextual factors makes it impossible to deduce a course of decision and action from theological and ethical first principles. The same factors make equally impossible a simple reading of such principles from a given act, decision or strategy. Nevertheless, when the context is understood, the principles of action often can be discerned and their relationships examined and understood. An appreciation of the context will help us to discern the role of various "middle-axioms" and non-axiomatic factors which enter into the determination of action along with theologically-derived principles.[1]

A second value of the study of Christian social strategies derives from the interaction of non-theological factors in any such strategy with a conception of the process of salvation. This, it would seem, should provide some clues to an understanding of the role of some of these same non-theological factors in the determination of a particular idea of the church. It should be possible to detect

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1. On the importance of middle-axioms in casuistic problems of all sorts, see John C. Bennett, Christian Ethics and Social Policy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). See also Edward Leroy Long, Jr., Conscience and Compromise (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954). Although the writer finds these insights helpful, he dissents from a deductive approach to the Christian ethic, even so qualified. He favors instead an interpretation of the nature of Christian ethics as an inquiry into the ethos of the Christian people, in which community the context of moral evaluation, decision and action itself provides the Christian with his ethic. Christian action is thus understood not as the enactment of judgements formulated in a deductive chain wherein the context of thought and action enters only at the gap in the middle of the chain, but as primarily a response to the context itself from beginning to end. The context itself furnishes the ethical criteria which guide the particular response in a given situation. The context is understood to include the living Word of God in Christ, in the community of Christ, the history of past responses in the living past of the community, and the fact of the Christian's loyalty to God in that faith. The same context includes his relation in loyalty and opposition to the world.

at least a few meaningful relationships between a Christian thinker's idea of the church and his social strategy by first examining the interplay of these factors with his conception of the process of salvation in each of these two features of his thought. One such factor which enters importantly into our particular study is the presence of individualistic or solidaristic assumptions about the nature of man and society.

Finally, the nature of our times gives a particular urgency to the question of social strategy. Ours is a time when the social atmosphere is crowded with carefully-deliberated secular strategies. These are directed toward a confused array of ends. They are executed with concerted effort and consumate skill over long periods of time by a host of special interest groups and ideological adherants. They are armed with increasingly refined technical and socio-psychological weapons. These strategies exert a sustained and pervasive influence upon the media of communication through which most people in modern societies receive their information and interpreta-

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tions. Facts and interpretations thus selectively presented go into the formation of opinions, concepts and value-preferences. By manipulating these on a mass scale and by political pressure many such interest-groups heavily influence foreign and domestic governmental policies which today set the context of possible choices for the individual citizen in large areas of his moral life. Amid such a host of strategies, it is hardly conceivable that the claims of the Christian gospel will continue to be understood or to be relevant to the daily lives of most Christians unless Christians actively advance those claims with the aid of conscious social strategies of a kind appropriate to the distinctive aims and convictions of Christian faith.[1]

Methodology and Organization

Scope

The aim of this study is only to detect, trace and analyse critically relationships which existed between the idea of the church and Christian social strategy within a particular theological movement in history, and to show how changes in the one were related to changes in the other. We

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1. For a general discussion of the foregoing problems and their significance as seen here see Social Action, XVIII, Nos. 1-6, (October, 1951-May, 1952).

may expect that our conclusions will have some relevance to further study of these relationships as they have existed in other times and other theological streams, including those of the present. It cannot be claimed on the basis of this study, however, that the idea of the church and Christian social strategy are always everywhere related to one another in the same way as they were in the men which we have studied here. We do not claim to have proven that they are related at all in every case. We have indicated above our reasons for suspecting that some relationship will be found wherever there is a Christian social strategy as we have defined it.[1]

The particular theological stream which we have selected for study is nineteenth-century American Congregationalism. The identity of its three main stages of development has been indicated above.[2] It remains here to mention the reasons for its selection.

Not all Christian theological traditions have shown an interest in strategies for transforming society. The most fruitful tradition for a limited study of our topic seems to be one descended from Calvinism, which has fostered such an

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1. Supra, p. 27.

2. Supra, pp. 2 f., 13-19.

interest to a notable degree.[1] The same consideration commends a particular stream which presents a number of attempts to enact such strategies throughout the period over which it is to be studied. This affords an opportunity to consider actions as well as stated ideas. A comparison of several diverse traditions would present more striking contrasts. For the above reasons we have chosen instead to follow the movement of ideas within one stream which exhibits a continuity as well as some distinct contrasts among the three primary stages of its development.

The developments which took place in nineteenth-century thought are of great relevance to contemporary thought. The study of these ideas is both rewarding and discomforting. We find there many of the initial formulations of great issues in modern thought which seem to us as sound today as the day they were written. At the same time we encounter ideas against which we are still reacting with immediacy and feeling. This ambivalent reaction to the nineteenth century is

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1. See James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (Columbia University Press, 1936), chap. i., wherein the point is made that the social gospel flowered in the countries where Calvinism was most deeply entrenched, being thus "correlative" in its existence with Calvinism. This he ascribes to Calvinism's "this-worldly" emphasis, as opposed to the Lutheran "other-worldliness" and the Catholic "next-worldliness." The relation to Richard Niebuhr's types is readily apparent.

itself witness to the fact that we must understand it if we are to understand ourselves.[1]

At the same time, that period is sufficiently distant in time to enable us to draw upon a more reliable fund of historical judgements than could be the case with a period of the twentieth century. This is important because the limitations of time and space in such a study as this make it necessary to build upon a general historical foundation laid elsewhere if adequate attention is to be given to our special topic.

Our study covers the major portion of a century, allowing the movement of ideas and actions to determine the natural point of beginning and ending within the general period. The context of American culture includes some significant changes during the period: the rise of urban culture, the flowering of the romantic movement, the coming of the industrial revolution, the maturing of the natural sciences and the beginnings of the social sciences. Such various social problems as slavery, alcoholic temperance, city slums and labor were related to these changes in intellectual and cultural climate.

Method

In the beginning stages of this study it became apparent that an understanding of a thinker's conception of the

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1. See Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949).

process of salvation is necessary if we are to grasp his idea of the church, because it is the basic theological root of such an idea. The idea of the process of salvation was also recognized as an important ingredient in Christian social ideas and strategies.

Considerable published material is available dealing with salvation, from which thought about its process could be gleaned for the theological background of the idea of the church. Much of the thought about the church had to be pieced together from the writings of men within the nineteenth-century stream in scattered references to the subject. Several excellent studies have been made of the social ideas of Protestant leaders of various nineteenth-century periods. These works also contain some clues to their social activities and the strategies which lay behind them. The classic work of Charles Hopkins on the Social Gospel movement, covering the period from 1865 to 1915 must be mentioned.[1] The work of Henry May covers the period from 1828 to 1895 on this movement and its background while that by James Dombrowski covers the background through 1900.[2] There have been added since the beginning of

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1. Charles H. Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940).

2. Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York, 1949); James Dombrowski, Christian Socialism.

this study two other capable treatments. One is by Charles C. Cole, Jr., dealing with the Northern evangelists from 1826 to 1860.[1] The other, by John Bodo deals with a number of clergymen from 1812 to 1848.[2]

The writer's survey of such books as the above revealed three important general stages of development in nineteenth-century soteriology, ecclesiology and social ethics. Three men in particular stood out because of the part of each in the initiation of the change from one stage to another. Their thought and action may serve to focus our description of the whole development.

These three men do not typify the whole complex development of nineteenth-century American theology, of course. Several less original thinkers would no doubt be more typical of the mass of participants even in the particular movements to which we have restricted our study. The value of such pioneering figures is that they typify the cutting-edge of the movement of ideas with which we are primarily concerned. Each represents a new direction in the interpretation and characterization of the process of salvation, upon which is based a

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1. Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

2. John Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1800-1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).

new idea of the church in his thought. Each also represents a different strategy for Christian social action.

We have attempted to reconstruct their thought, using their published works and also examining some unpublished letters and manuscripts where these appeared to be relevant. We have sought to see the interplay of these ideas in the living minds of men in a conversation as they fought for and against one another's ideas. It is in this context that the relationships among these ideas are most meaningfully revealed and their relevance to our own conversations made clearest.

Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875. Finney's early revivals led the transition to the "New School" of evangelism. This school centered around the "new measures" which he popularized widely. Finney attempted to preserve the formal characteristics of the older view of the process of salvation. This view emphasized an abrupt conversion to disinterested benevolence through the operation of the Holy Spirit, attested by an intense emotional experience of self-surrender. The newness of Finney's measures consisted not so much in external technique as in the doctrinal revision which they required and reflected. Finney openly stressed the complete freedom of the sinner to yield to the persuasion of the Spirit, to believe and to change his will whenever it pleased him. He asserted that the evangelist's deliberate efforts have the power to expedite the decision by acting as the channel of the Spirit.

Finney eventually came to regard conversion as only the beginning of regeneration, which is completed in a second change to "entire sanctification." The process of that change has the same characteristics as that of conversion.

The church is a transformed fellowship of believers brought into association by each believer's voluntary decision in his conversion experience. The business of the church's internal life is the sanctification of the converted. Its primary concern is the production of conversions through revivals, which are located outside its own limits. Attention to the church itself is therefore slighted by comparison. The church is confined to the local fellowship of believers.

Finney's social strategy employs the impulse of the converted and sanctified to express and prove their surrender of self-love by the energetic pursuit of benevolent activity. Believers join with others outside the church in voluntary societies for promoting social and moral reforms. These local and national reform societies are unified into a single "benevolent empire" through their control by a group of wealthy merchants who have devoted their whole resources to reform and charity under the influence of Finney and other evangelists. A complete internal transformation of society is expected but only a few social institutions need radical revision.[1]

Horace Bushnell, 1802-1876. The most radical change which occurred within our movement of theological ideas was the rise of evangelical liberalism. Horace Bushnell's roman-

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1/ For information on Finney's life and thought see listings and annotations in bibliography.

tic Christianity was largely responsible for this development. For this reason Bushnell becomes the central figure in our study. He is presented against the backdrop of the orthodox and Finneyite revivalisms against which he reacted. The consequences of his radical innovations are pursued as they became clear in Gladden's liberal theology and his social gospel. Our study presents these three figures in chronological order, however.

Bushnell's impact was registered more slowly than Finney's. After 1840 it was distinguishable as the basis of a rather nebulous theological movement associated with his name. His independent attitude toward doctrinal standards and his tendency to bless nature and culture through his romantic supernaturalism were welcomed and appropriated. The subtleties of his theology were little understood, however.

Bushnell rejected the stress placed upon radical discontinuity by the revivalistic view of the process of salvation ascribing it to an excess of individualism. He substituted the concept of regeneration as a life-long growth nurtured by the direct impact of parental character upon that of the child through the organic unity of the family. Christian nurture is both a voluntary process working through the freedom and self-determining power of the will and an involuntary process working through the Spirit of Christ incarnate in organic human communities.

The church is the organic body whose natural unity is restored and preserved by the presence of Christ as its controlling corporate will. By virtue of this the church restores and preserves the natural unity of the families within it, making them vehicles of Christian nurture. Through its families the church penetrates the other organic social bodies, making them vehicles of the same regenerative process. The role and nature of the church is thus basic to the process of salvation. It is the comprehensive organic community within which salvation is in process. It will eventually include the whole of humanity.

Bushnell's social strategy seeks to bring about a radical transformation of all aspects of human culture by fostering the increase of Christian nurture within the church, and its extention from that center. The basic task of social strategy is to develop an understanding of Christian nurture and its presuppositions among men in the church. This Bushnell attempted through his pastoral office, especially through preaching and the writing of theological books. The latter grew out of his preaching and his facing of parish problems. His strategy seeks at the same time to provide moral education about political issues and to recommend the uniting of individual Christians through their unity in the church for political and personal action. The church must use power responsibly, but it must use its inherent power.[1]

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1. See bibliography.

Washington Gladden, 1836-1918. In the 1880's the Bushnellian movement finally became identified with a distinct school known as "Progressive Orthodoxy" or "The New Theology." Gladden was one of this school's most explicit Bushnellians. In Gladden Bushnell's experience-centered theological method and his tendencies toward immanentalism crystallized into natural theology.

His concept of the process of salvation was based upon evolution in nature, in which God is immanent by virtue of the Incarnation. Gladden was influenced by Spencer's social Darwinism, to which Bushnell's thought was readily adaptable. He insisted upon social solidarity in salvation through the growth of the Kingdom of God within society. He echoed Bushnell's emphasis upon the organic unity of society and the church, but understood the church not as an organism but a voluntary fellowship bound closely together by love. Christian nurture without the organic dimension became the evocation of benevolent sentiments which lie just beneath the surface of good human nature. It also includes the education of the loving so that the mind may see the social needs to which love is the answer. Persuasive exhortation to action is also indispensible.

The church is a voluntary community bound together by love. Its essence is brotherly fellowship in a common ministry of service to the Kingdom of God. The church is always to be understood as subordinate to the Kingdom. Its exist-

ence is justified only by its service to the Kingdom's growth. If it fails to serve faithfully it will be torn down by society and the Kingdom will grow without it.

The aim of Gladden's social strategy is to accelerate the inevitable progress of society. Society is to be awakened to social evil by the minister as prophet. He uses the church to teach men the law of love as the law of life and to persuade them to adopt it as the law of personal action in every social role. He also seeks to mold the institutions of the church into a channel for the propagation of love. The application of love to social problems will cause them to melt away. The transformation of society involves only minor structural changes. These, love and social ingenuity will naturally produce.[1]

Order of Presentation

The three chapters of Part II discuss changes in the conception of the process of salvation. This information is necessary to our presentation of the idea of the church and Christian social strategy. Part III relates this movement of ideas of the process of salvation to the changes which took place in the idea of the church. Part IV then discusses the concomitant changes in strategy for Christian social action. The relation of these changes to those previously discerned in the process of salvation and in the idea of the church is discussed in the process of describing the changes in strategy.

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1. See bibliography.

In each of these three Parts we follow the entire development of one theme. In each Part the description is focused through the successive ideas of Finney, Bushnell and Gladden. Lesser attention is given to several other figures who provide illuminating insights into the development. The movement from Part to Part is a topical movement. From the relationship of the individual believer to God in the process of salvation, we proceed to the relation of the individual to his fellow believers in the church. We then move to the relation of the community of believers in the church to the social community through Christian social strategy and action.

Part V of the study presents a critical analysis of the patterns which have been discerned in this movement of ideas. Some constructive remarks are ventured concerning the relevance of these ideas to a contemporary understanding of the church and social strategy.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The New England theological climate out of which Finney, Bushnell and Gladden all came had undergone marked changes during the two centuries preceding their own. Certain words and concepts concerning the church and the process of salvation arising out of the issues of this theological past set the initial terms of the nineteenth century's own battles, even for men who no longer intended to look primarily to tradition for their theological direction.[1]

Puritanism In America

Theocracy and reform of the church. The founders of Plymouth and of the Massachusetts Bay colony both shared a zealous desire to prove the possibility of reforming the church along the lines of the Puritan protest against the Church of England's condition. This mission animated the whole New England experiment. America was the new Canaan. The Puritan concern for both personal and public morality occupied a high place in this vision. Some control over the civil state by the church was a practical necessity for the

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1. For the secondary sources upon which this description is primarily based see bibliography, section I.

success of the experiment (in which the "saints" were outnumbered by the less religiously motivated "strangers"). At the same time, this was defended to the strangers on positive Biblical grounds.

Such a theocracy was not conceived merely as an expedient for the political protection of a purified church. It rested also on the conviction that a moral society could only be attained as the fruit of lives which had been regenerated by God's grace. The strangers in the Puritan colony must for this reason agree to abide by the rule of God's Word in the Scripture through a covenant of the nation with Him.[1] Social ills were seen as manifestations of God's wrath over violations of this covenant on the part of the nation. Violations of the covenant by the strangers might threaten the nation quite as much as those by the saints.

The rule of God over the state under the national covenant was understood to exist by virtue of the obedience of the nation to His Word in the Scripture rather than to the church as such. Yet it was the saints--and particularly the ministers--who interpreted the Scripture. They actually made many of the decisions of the political body in this way. The magistrate is duty-bound to enforce the keeping of the covenant. A large degree of practical control of civil affairs by

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1. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," pp. 136 f.

churchmen continued--though not without continual struggle--into the nineteenth century. Even the establishment did not end in Connecticut until 1818, and in Massechusetts not until 1833.

Predestination in the "federal" theology. The New England Puritan founders followed the covenant or "federal theology of such English Puritans as William Ames, William Perkins, John Preston and John Ball. The Calvinism of this theology was in fact a considerably modified version.[1] Nevertheless, it still retained a vigorous predestinarianism held as a firm bulwark against any movement in the Pelagian direction.[2] In New England, the conviction that they were of the elect provided an authority for the control of civil affairs by the saints.

A second feature of this theology was the centrality of the authority of Scripture. The Bible was conceived to be the sole basis of all other authority including that stemming from the doctrine of predestination. The locus of religious authority was even originally more multiple than the formal statements of the Puritan divines admitted. Nevertheless,

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1. But see ibid., p. 136. Emerson points out that, while Puritanism was quite different from high Calvinism, it was much less different from Calvin himself than Perry Miller suggests.

2. See Perry Miller, "Preparation for Salvation."

the referring of all questions to Scripture remained largely unquestioned, except by the Deists, into the nineteenth century. Men like Finney, Bushnell and the early Unitarians regarded their theologies as Scripturally derived and presented them by reference to Scriptural texts.

Another very important locus of authority in the Puritan theology of the founders was the power of the light of reason there in the mind of man by God's endowment of his nature with this high distinction among created beings. The great religious importance of the trained mind was clearly reflected in the tremendous concern of the Massachusetts colony for maintaining an educated ministry.[1] Little recognized in formal statements as an authority rivaling that of scripture in importance, this principle was nevertheless vigorously asserted and highly operative in every judgement. The Platonic bent of Puritan thought was strong indeed. The emphasis upon the light of reason reflected the influence of the Cambridge Platonists. The Puritan, with his Ramist logic, assumed that the mind of man can read off the truth in the Bible as directly as one might read a road sign. The impact of this principle continued into the nineteenth century quite as much as did the Puritan heritage of Biblicism. This motif

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1. See Morison, Puritan Pronaos, and Williams (ed.), Harvard Divinity School.

was reflected in the theological system which typified Nathaniel W. Taylor's restatement of orthodoxy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Above all it was present in the thought of the whole unitarian development from Charles Chauncy in the eighteenth century through the Unitarian separation in the nineteenth. This whole group overtly stressed the rational note in the Puritan heritage at the expense of other notes.

A presumptive test of election for owning the covenant of church membership. The federal theology combined a strict doctrine of predestination with the concept of the church as ideally the covenant of the elect. This combination issued in the application of a set of standards for church membership. While God alone knows the identity of His elect with certainty, these are the participants in the internal covenant with Him, and they are not to commune with the non-elect. But those enjoying the inner covenant are solemnly obligated to own the external covenant of the church. The non-separatist Puritans did not hold that the church is defiled if any reprobate is present in it. One who passed certain tests might safely be admitted into church membership, therefore, on the presumption that he is of the elect. The qualities tested might be simulated by a crafty reprobate, but that will rarely happen. The status and the content of this list of measurable characteris-

tics was an extrapolation from Calvinism, stemming recognizably from Calvin's own reflections on the problem of election despite significant differences.

The standards for church membership included three features which deserve attention for our purposes. The first was the subscription to a sound doctrinal position. The most sensitive points of this orthodoxy were those intended to guard against conscious or inadvertant Arminianism.

With the second and third generations of Puritanism in New England, the bases for later large concessions in the direction of a practical Arminianism were already being laid unwittingly. This came through the development of the concept--extrapolated from certain statements by the founders,--of a state of "preparation for salvation" as existing prior to regeneration. This provided a theological justification for stronger moral exhortation of the strangers as well as the saints. As Perry Miller has shown, such men as Perkins, Preston and Ames opened up this line of thought. A valid covenant requires that both parties to it understand its terms prior to entering into the agreement. It must therefore be possible for the "natural" man to know prior to the flash of election the terms set forth by God in His covenant. After all, the founders themselves had asserted that God will consent to deal with sinners according to the terms of a covenant, even though they had not considered it a step toward regeneration.

Neither they nor their successors in developing this direction, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard and Peter Bulkeley, saw in it any danger to the vigor of Calvinistic anti-Pelagianism--despite the warnings of Pemble and Gibs Firmin that Hooker and Shepard were opening the door to Arminianism. With Cotton Mather this development finally pushed beyond the bounds of orthodoxy in clear fashion.[1]

The importance of a strict doctrine of election in the New England heritage is indicated by the fact that formal adherence to that doctrine continued to be vigorously affirmed even in the act of cutting the ground out from under it. Indeed, Cotton Mather himself was in no wise disposed to discard it. Much the same kind of treatment was accorded Jonathan Edwards' restatement on his own grounds of a strict view of election and divine sovereignty as it was "developed" by his successors--especially by Dwight and Taylor in the period leading from the eighteenth century into the nineteenth.

The second test to be met for church membership was moral: the leading of an upright life. Men of the nineteenth century began to ignore or to overthrow adherence to the full body of orthodox doctrine as a standard. The moral emphasis, on the other hand, was heightened during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, if only through a shift of proportion.

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1. Miller, "Preparation for Salvation."

Although church discipline was frequently lax between revivals, the concern of churchmen for the morals of both the church membership and society at large was a consistently recurrent one from the first days of Puritanism on down the years.

In the generation of the founders, the upright life required of church members was regarded as obtainable only as the fruit of election. The founders vigorously guarded against the inversion of this relationship. They recognized a realm of moral conduct within the competence of natural ability, however. It was not to be regarded as a step toward salvation, but when controlled by being within the framework of a theocratic society under the leadership of the internally righteous saints this natural morality was sufficient to ensure the public welfare. The second generation attributed the alarming decline in the welfare of the nation to violation of the external and spiritual covenants. They blamed saints and strangers alike for this whole condition for which God was punishing the nation and exhorted both to take action against it. Perry Miller sees in this seeming moral dilemma the root of the progressive undermining of the original Puritan spirit. The later Puritans continued and increased a type of exhortation of the strangers which implied assumptions contradictory to those implied by the strict predestinarian doctrine which

they continued to urge at the same time.[1]

The relation of the process of salvation to both the understanding of the nature of the church and the problem of social morality in Puritan times is nowhere better revealed than in the modification of the third requirement for church membership: an experience of regeneration. Such a recognizable experience was regarded as the product of election, as was a recognizable and genuine moral uprightness: neither could be attained by natural effort, but only given by God.

Under the pressure of the second generation decline in social well-being and moral tone, the strangers were exhorted with the aim of convincing them that they could attain unto a standard of external righteousness without being among the spiritual elect. It was emphasized increasingly that it was their duty under the national covenant to attain and maintain that standard. The same exhortation was now increasingly applied to the children of the saints, since the general decline included a decline in religious experiences as well. But there could be no external achievement in this realm, and hence no exhortation to have such an experience.

God's displeasure would be withdrawn and the social problem would be solved as the result of the increase of internally moral saints if only a truly significant number of

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1. Ibid.

experiences of regeneration would take place among baptized children of the saints. Such a revival lay only in God's power, however. There was nothing man could do about it beyond continuing to preach the Word of God to the whole populace. As the ranks of the saints became depleted, the Puritan control of the community was threatened and with it the whole theocratic experiment. This exigency led to the well-known "half-way covenant," in which the requirement of an experience of regeneration for owning the church-covenant was retained and yet compromised. By the time of Cotton Mather, the external righteousness attainable in the state of "preparation for salvation" was being expounded less as a series of steps in the now expanded process of salvation than as a means for saving the state. Cotton Mather suggested to his hearers that the work of external repentance of which they were capable would not merely stave off God's wrath against the community, but would assure heaven to them without an experience of regeneration.[1] Eventually, Solomon Stoddard entirely gave up the attempt to determine who is a saint and admitted men to the full covenant and the sacraments without such an experience. The sacraments were then no longer seals of the covenant but "converting ordinances."

The importance of an experience of religion was still

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1. Ibid.

deeply ingrained in the New England mind, however. It was soon to be reasserted by Jonathan Edwards. Together with the Methodist and Baptist impact upon the American religious climate during the Awakenings, this heritage served to preserve revivalism through periodic rejuvenations as a dominant theme continuing into the nineteenth century.

Revivals in the Eighteenth Century

The Great Awakenings. The widespread upsurge of religious interest and vigor usually known as the "Great Awakening" in America began with the highly emotional preaching of the Dutch Reformed pastor Frelinghuysen in the 1720s. It was actually a series of awakenings having considerable diversity and independence in different localities. This phenomenon nevertheless resulted in a striking unity in viewpoint and in active cooperation across denominational lines throughout the colonies during the period.[1]

The extensive preaching journeys of the English Methodist leader, George Whitefield, played a significant role in

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1. Dillenberger and Welch, Protestant Christianity, p. 136. This work employs the name "Great Awakenings," suggested by Robert Handy in order to convey the diversity of the movement. The same diversity and a basic continuity with the Awakenings of the eighteenth century is gained by the further suggestion of the name "Great Revivals" for the nineteenth-century movement instead of the usual "Second Awakening." The two periods differed, but revivals had never actually ceased in the interim and the Awakenings were varied in character from the beginning.

the unification of American Protestantism's religious tone. The response to his preaching was great wherever he went during his first visit, and he was heard by large numbers in many of the colonies. Not only did the Methodist movement emphasize a warm, personal religious experience such as Whitefield and the two Wesleys had felt, but it also had a strong interest in the vigorous expression of Christian faith through charity and the reform of social evils through organized effort. Whitefield differed from Wesley in upholding a view of predestination which he identified with the position of Calvinism as against the so-called Arminian position which Wesley shared with the majority of those in the Church of England in his times. The Baptists, for their part, were Puritans themselves in a sense.

There were great affinities between Whitefield's views and those of the other most significant leader of the period of the Great Awakenings, Jonathan Edwards. Through his own highly original philosophical apparatus, Edwards developed a theology featuring a strict doctrine of election based upon his awesome sense of the divine sovereignty and issuing in a thoroughgoing determinism. The main spring of this theological direction was his ardent opposition to the prevalent type of cultural Arminianism. This often tended toward a comfortable, complacent bourgeois morality which thought God would not withhold the reward of heaven if one led a reasonably

reverent and moral life.

Edwards took a moderate view of the revivals. He accepted their validity and took a large part in their leadership. At the same time he deplored the naive extremes and urged a cautious assessment of the dramatic manifestations which occurred in individual behavior. These are not in themselves indicative of a genuine conversion. Such subjective experience is not to be regarded as specious merely because it is non-conceptual. But it is not genuine unless it issues in true love of God and of the neighbor. He reversed the policy of Stoddardeanism in his church in Northampton--an act which was not warmly received by a number of members. His tendency to base church authority on religious experience foreshadowed the nineteenth century religious liberalism which issued in the ending of the corporate discipline of the Congregational churches.[1]

A similarly moderate view of the revivals was taken by the great Lutheran leader, Henry M. Muhlenberg. He provides a further illustration of the extent to which a broad unity of viewpoint and an active cooperation across denominational lines existed during the period of the Awakenings. Muhlenberg was a German pietist trained at Halle. He was not a revivalist, but he admitted Whitefield to his pulpit and he preached

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1. Gustafson, "Congregational Church-Order," p. 27.

in German, Dutch Reformed and Anglican churches. Michael Schlatter, leader of the Reformed group among the German colonists and a personal friend of Muhlenberg, apparently did not actively engage in the revivals even to the limited extent Muhlenberg did but was not unfriendly toward them.[1]

Yet all was not unity and cooperation. The validity of the revivals themselves became the center of a heated controversy between extremists who took sides in favor of them or opposed to them. Institutional ruptures accompanied the theological disputes. Typifying the faction ardently favoring the revivals were William Tennant, in the 1730's, and especially his son, Gilbert. These leaders of "New Side" Presbyterianism insisted upon a "converted ministry" and generally doubted the need for an educated ministry. The Tennants founded their "Log College"--later to become Princeton--in the service of those convictions, and the "New Side" split from the "Old Side" Presbyterians from 1741 until 1758.

Under similar convictions, a group within Congregationalism in New England invited heated controversy by zealous words and deeds directed against the unrevived in the ministry. Considerable odium was won for their cause by occasional incidents such as the burning of "idolatrous" finery together with the books of unrevived ministers in 1743 at New London.

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1. Brauer, Protestantism in America, p. 58.

This took place under the influence of James Davenport's preaching. In this wing of New England revivalism, the side of the Puritan heritage emphasizing an experience of regeneration was being stressed in opposition to the side of that heritage which so highly valued reason and education.

On the side of reaction against the revivals the "Old Side" Presbyterians typified the largest group. Both they and the corresponding group in New England opposed the revivals, suspecting the whole movement of undermining orthodoxy. They were especially alarmed by excesses the extremists perpetrated, such as the New London incident. The attitude of Moravianism's conservative Lutheran orthodoxy was exhibited by Zinzendorf's opposition to the revivals while he was in America.

In New England, the most aggressive opponent of Edwards and the revivals was Charles Chauncy, who launched his attack against the revivals in Boston in 1743. Chauncy's development of the rationalistic and humanitarian side of the Puritan heritage went hand in hand with his antagonism toward the resurgence of its conversion experience emphasis.

Chauncy was still far removed from the mild Deism popular among such men as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. These men held themselves above such nonsense as revivals. Yet even men such as these were not beyond being emotionally moved by the great preachers of the Awakenings. Frugal but

humanitarian with all, Franklin once found himself so touched by Whitefield's preaching that he went overboard and completely emptied his pockets for the Bethesda Orphanage for which Whitefield was appealing.

The impact of the Great Awakenings of the 1730's and '40's was not to be under-estimated, even among those not favorably disposed toward revivalism. It is no wonder that during the second half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth those who hoped for a religious and moral revitalization of American life tended ever to visualize the process as a resurgence of revival experiences, spreading outward in widening circles to embrace and transform the new world and thence perhaps the old as well.

The revolutionary years and the turn of the century revivals. The period from the 1760's to the 1790's saw a decline in religious fervor, and likewise in revivals. This was not due to a repudiation of revivalism, however. The primary factors accounting for it were the diversion of attention to the pressing matters which issued in the Revolutionary War, the general post-war slump in morals and, later, the absorption of the nation in the new problems brought by independence.

The period was far from being devoid of religious though and activity, however. A significant legacy was left

to the nineteenth century by the theological work of Samuel Hopkins during the 1770's. Hopkins regarded his "Consistent Calvinism" as merely a clarification of the theology of Jonathan Edwards. Actually, a series of conscious modifications of Edwards' position had begun immediately after his death in 1757. These were not regarded as changes of substance by those who undertook them. Progressive concessions concerning the freedom of the individual to make a real choice between right and wrong reflected the progressive loss of the majestic quality of Edwards' understanding of the divine sovereignty. This direction continued within the Edwardsian tradition into the nineteenth century, recapitualting what had happened to the original Federal Theology of the New England founders.

Hopkinsianism saw the principle of "disinterested benevolence" as the very essence of Christianity. The principle stemmed recognizably from Edwards' concept of the Christian ethic. He had centered Christian morality in the universal love of Being in general in God, and had insisted that there is no bridge of human possibility between the self-interested love of the natural man and the non-self-referent love of the Christian. The Hopkinsians now called for total sacrifice of self-interest for the sake of the sum of all being.[1] They

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1. Haroutunian, Piety and Moralism, pp. 82 f. Haroutunian points out how much Hopkins had become humanized, as revealed in his equating Edwards' love to Being in general with the different notion of the love of all particular beings.

proposed the test of willingness to be damned for the glory of God should that be necessary for the good of the cosmos and the moral order. The full force of this ethic was brought to bear in opposition to the slave trade, in the name of disinterested benevolence as true Christianity.

The 1780's saw a slight increase in religious interest and in revival activity. A revival occurred in 1784 in young Nathaniel Emmons' church, which was followed by periodic revivals there through subsequent years of the century. Emmons represented a modified Hopkinsianism, defending the "exercisers" wing as against the "tasters." Emmons opposed any active enlistment of conversions by the preacher as contrary to the divine sovereignty. He insisted that the individual does take an active part in his conversion, but reduced the acts of men to a mere chain of exercises caused by God. On these grounds, he even opposed Asahel Nettleton's effort early in the next century to supply words more fitting to revivals than those of Watts for hymns. He was positively scandalized by Nettleton's going so far as to suggest appropriate tunes! Yet Nettleton's basic view of appropriate revival techniques and his reasons for his view were the same as those of Emmons. Emmons lived until 1840, serving as a living representative of the eighteenth-century Hopkinsian "orthodoxy" which was being by-passed by the new theological movements of the nineteenth century.

Despite this faint stirring of the revival spirit, the dominant religious note of the 1780's was the rise of a new militant Deism. This was spreading with great vigor by the early 1890's. Its temper was typified by the writings of Tom Paine, moving from the presuppositions of Common Sense, in 1776, to the aggressive religious belligerency of The Age of Reason, in 1795. This movement expressed the mood of the majority of students at colleges such as Yale. It was making great headway on the frontier, which was in the process of a great boom beginning in the first of the '90's. Into this situation came a new surge of revivals from 1790 to 1806 in New England, and from 1796 to 1819 on the frontier. By 1799 what has usually been termed the "Second Awakening" was on. In fact the first Great Awakenings had never fully died out. The turn of the century revivals were a resurgence of that same broad movement with the same diversity of character in different localities.

The beginning in New England was heralded by the response of the "infidel" student body at Yale to the preaching and the arguments of Timothy Dwight in 1795 , at the beginning of his presidency there. From Yale, the revivals spread through New England. Dwight still stood in the tradition of Edwards and Hopkins, and not least in his assertion that evil can never be reformed; it must be changed in its essence. But the need for apologetics was urgently felt by Dwight. He

asserted the moral freedom of the individual will and the general innocence of certain natural human characteristics. Divine sovereignty was largely expressed in the fact that 'circumstances of birth and education have a great deal to do with a man's moral life."[1] Contemporaneous with the spread of the New England revivals but beginning a few years later was a similar movement on the frontier. These revivals, often assumed the form of camp-meetings such as that at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1800, the place at which Peter Cartwright was converted in 1801.

By 1806 the revivals in the East had waned, while those on the frontier continued in vigor for a few more years. By that time the movement succeeded in restoring the moral tone lost during the post-war slump, in checking the rise of infidelity, and in covering the burgeoning frontier with a religious climate and a sparse but vigorous ministry. Thus revivalism was given a new boost in prestige at the turn of the century. Its presuppositions about the process of salvation dominated the religious climate as a new era dawned.

Two Directions in the Nineteenth-Century Background

Conservatism. During its first decades, the nineteenth century was everywhere marked by the breaking up of old forms.

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1. Haroutunian, Piety and Moralism, p. 249.

Many New England Christians moved toward one of the new directions. Others chose to stand upon the theological ground of the past. Those who took this conservative direction were united more in what they opposed than in what they affirmed. It is difficult to place these men within a clear pattern of theological streams, so we shall merely attempt to indicate a few of their notes of opposition to the new ideas and to one another.

The most vocal adherents of the "Old School" in the Congregational churches attempted to preserve the now-frozen and institutionalized heritage of Edwards and Hopkins. Emmons was as supralapsarian as ever. He opposed the rising Sunday School movement as well as opposing Dwight's modifications of "Consistent Calvinism" and the Finneyite methods of evangelism. He was not reactionary about everything, however. He helped found the Massachusetts Missionary Society which "was a precursor of many of the later benevolent organizations."[1] Leonard Woods and particularly Edwards Amasa Park, of Andover. were no doubt the foremost academic defenders of Emmon's brand of Hopkinsianism. Emmons illustrated his attachment to an older age in his dress and by chewing tobacco with colonial vigor to the day he died at the age of ninety-five.

Asahel Nettleton displayed his doctrinaire tendencies

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 20.

in his many long letters on subjects of theological controversy. Nettleton had struggled against Timothy Dwight while still a student at Yale, in 1808. He gained wide acclaim in New England as an evangelist, from 1811 to 1826. In 1827 at the New Lebanon convention he joined Lyman Beecher, whom he admired at the time, in attacking the "new measures" in evangelism introduced by Finney and the Western revivalists. Nettleton soon sadly renounced Beecher to join Bennet Tyler during the latter's long dispute with Dwight's greatest pupil, Nathaniel W. Taylor, and the whole New Haven Theology.

Bushnell studied under Taylor, from whose system he dissented immediately. He appropriated much from Taylor, however--especially Taylor's assertion of the self-determining power of the will. Taylor's critic, Tyler, became Bushnell's most vocal critic. The views of both Taylor and Tyler will be discussed later in connection with Bushnell.

New Englanders accorded a respectful hearing to the conservatism represented by such Presbyterians as Charles Hodge and expressed by the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review. The orthodoxy of this group who defended the Westminister catechism differed importantly from the modified Hopkinsianism of Emmons and Tyler. Hodge was far closer to historic Calvinism than was the "Consistent Calvinism" of Hopkins' interpretation.[1] Hodge was influenced by the Scottish

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1. But see James Hastings Nichols, "Events and Trends--Early Nineteenth Century" in They Seek a Country; The American Presbyterians, Some Aspects ed. by Gaius Jackson Slosser (New York, 1955), pp. 234-250.

Philosophy through the mediation of the tradition of Witherspoon and Alexander. His own theological work was that of a system-builder, scholarly and rigidly orthodox. He could with some justification observe that "... a new idea never originated in this [Princeton] seminary."[1] He even denounced Edwards' innovations. Hodge was a polemicist rather than an apologist. His reviews of Bushnell's Christian Nurture and God in Christ indicate the sublime sense of theological security with which he could weigh and dispose of new formulations. Adeptly, and with a fair mind, he sorted out and acknowledged any new affirmations of the sound old ideas, and displayed at times an almost genial equanimity toward those new ones which he had safely demolished. He keenly discerned the naturalistic dangers implicit in incipient liberalism, whether Taylor's or Bushnell's. He criticized these features with more understanding of the ideas of his opponents and of the religious issues at stake than was possible to minds as defensive as Tyler's.

But the restless forward movement of the century was not in a mood for such caution, for the most part. The advance of the years saw fewer minds of Hodge's quality defending historic orthodoxy. Indeed Hodge himself could be charged with bearing the "stains of humanism" by one Dutch Calvinist critic.[2]

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1. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy," pp. 11 ff.
2. Ibid., p. 12.

The force of his criticism of the liberal direction in theology had to wait for the decades following the first World War to find a climate in which its validity could be appreciated to any great extent by highly original theologians.

Much of the blame for this must be laid to a moralistic individualism which had been growing since Jonathan Edwards' re-emphasis of religious experience. In the conservative revivalism of nineteenth-century New England, of whatever shade, this tendency had become intense. Hodge, on the other hand, expressed his agreement with but slight dissent to Bushnell's contention that the nature of the church is thoroughly corporate. It should be based upon the covenant rather than organic laws of nature, however. Men like Emmons and Tyler saw the process of salvation as entirely confined to abrupt individual conversion experiences in revivals. God might send a revival if He chose to do so. If one did not come, it was because immoral men had grieved away the Spirit. It was regarded as an infringement of God's sovereignty for men to attempt to produce such a revival by their own initiative. While Nettleton took a position much like that of Edwards on the place of emotion in conversions, his own preaching was entirely intellectual and doctrinal, without any hint of emotional appeal.[1]

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1. His preaching is described in Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, Correspondence, etc. of Lyman Beecher, ed. by Charles Beecher (New York, 1864), II, 483.

The supralapsarianism of Emmons' kind of revivalism often expressed itself in a callous moralism respecting the plight of the poor. From the first decade of the century, respectable church-going people in general had tended to align themselves with the Federalist Party in politics, regarding the Jeffersonian position as tainted with infidelism. The religious individualism of the old school revivalism did nothing to mitigate this political conservatism.

The doctrinal basis of Old School revivalism unwittingly opened the door to the Finneyite modifications. Original sin has been overcome by the substitutionary atonement of Christ. But conversion requires that the Holy Spirit convict the individual of sin and move him to repent, before he can benefit from the gift. In this process man also plays his part, even if only as an "exercise." This position characterized the majority of New England church-goers at the beginning of the century. Its Biblical literalism and belief in a literal hell and in the substitutionary atonement were little questioned. With the coming of new moral and intellectual presuppositions in the culture, it could do no more than attempt to hold the gates against change and defend its traditional doctrines. It grew ever more defensive as the century drew to a close.

Unitarianism. On the side of change, the rising of radical protest against eighteenth-century orthodoxy was

exemplified by the Unitarian movement. Its humanitarianism and emphasis upon the divine light of reason had been characteristic of the churches in the vicinity of Boston in much the same form since Charles Chauncy's time. Its foremost nineteenth-century leaders were William Ellery Channing and James Walker in the ante-bellum period. Their positions were in substantial accord and were representative of the movement. Channing was influenced by Hopkins' sermons, finding his emphasis on disinterested benevolence highly appealing. The impact of the Scottish Philosophy upon him reinforced this conception. It also led him to an appreciation of the essential goodness of man and the social nature of moral improvement, and provided an alternative to hedonism.[1] Other notable leaders in the Harvard Divinity School were Levi Frisbie, Levi Hedge, and Francis Bowen.

All of these men placed considerable emphasis upon the inherent goodness of man and considered the process of salvation to be gradual. They stressed the winning of man from sin--the terms "error" and "folly" being preferred as the movement developed--by love rather than fear. The means appropriate to the process consisted in simply presenting the minds of men with the truth. The truth did not include, as it did for Finney, the fact that as a sinner one was damned

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1. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy," pp. 8f.

under God's inexorable justice. The feelings and the wisdom which belonged to man's basically good nature seemed to these men to be lying just beneath the surface, waiting to be encouraged and developed.

Unitarianism grew from the "light of reason" emphasis of Puritanism. An equally important ingredient was the infusion of the new moral feeling of romanticism. The Unitarian party had been essentially formed in New England Congregationalism by the time the Eastern revivals died out in 1806, and needed only a spark to touch off its separation and expansion. By 1810 Harvard was essentially a Unitarian institution. Channing's Baltimore sermon was the spark, and the Unitarian schism occurred in 1819. In the 1820's Lyman Beecher stumped the state of Connecticut in an effort to stem the Unitarian tide. For the time being, the movement was largely confined to Boston as a vigorous force, where Beecher went in 1826 to fight it from the pulpit. Emerson's criticism and challenge in his 1838 Harvard Divinity School Commencement Address began a trend toward the channeling of leadership either into Transcendentalism or into secular humanism. The growth of Unitarianism was somewhat curtailed, but it was to enjoy a new growth after the Civil War.

Its protest against the doctrine of the Trinity was actually merely an outgrowth of its humanitarianism and its championing of "reasonable" religion. The issue of freedom

of inquiry rapidly became its central rallying point as the movement developed during the century. Its radical protest had little impact upon nineteenth-century New England Christianity compared with the influence of Yale and Andover. The dominant stream of liberal theology coming from that region did not discard as much of the evangelical foundations in attempting a reconstruction of Christian theology and life.

PART II

CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE PROCESS OF SALVATION

CHAPTER III

CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY AND REVIVALISM'S NEW MEASURES

The Process of Salvation As Revivals of Religion

The Attempt To Save The Traditional View Of The Process Of Salvation

The revivalism of the "New School" in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism was essentially an attempt to save the same view of the process of salvation as had been held by eighteenth-century revivalism in its later development. To do so in the face of a new climate required a new approach to the instrument of the revival. It had become evident that the preaching techniques of the "Old School" no longer met with the response of former times. Charles G. Finney stands out as the pioneer of this new direction and the dominating figure of its development, though there were other men of impressive stature in the movement.

Characteristics Of The Process

The character of the process of salvation had been at issue in the controversy between the "New Side" and the "Old Side" at the beginning of the Great Awakenings. The argument centered about the validity of the revival itself as an integral part of the process. The view of revivals taken by Edwards had eventually won the day, and this was no longer at issue in the conflict of the nineteenth-century Schools. Revivals now stood at the center of the process as seen by both sides.

Crisis and discontinuity. -Both old and new revivalism thus emphasized the crisis and the discontinuity in conversion, Finney no less so than Tyler. Under original sin guilt is conveyed and man is justifiably sentenced to a literal hell. God has overcome this punishment by His substitutionary atonement in Christ. Hopkins had held that this is for all men, not just for the elect. He therefore had held a theory of dual or "co-existent" human and divine agency as operative in conversion. It is interesting to note that Wesley had regarded his similar views on the subject as the core of what he identified as Arminianism, in opposition to the type of Calvinistic doctrine represented by the Synod of Dort. Emmons had emphasized and extended this note even further.

To become effective in salvation, however, the atonement must be appropriated by the individual through a crisis experience. The first stage of the experience is the conviction of sin, followed by the occurrence of "serious thoughts" about one's final end and punishment. This will issue in the experience of surrendering oneself and of awareness of forgiveness, which will then result in a changed life of disinterested benevolence and the love of all Being. This will generally happen on a large scale, one man's conversion precipitating a revival of the larger part of a whole community.

Finney did not question the essentials of this outline

of the conversion experience. But he found that the transition into the first stage of the experience and the movement from one stage to another required external aid from the evangelist.

A definite experience of conversion thus received central emphasis. This emphasis was rooted in the Puritan heritage and channeled through Edwards, not only by virtue of the passing down of the idea itself but also as a product of an aspect of theological methodology common to this tradition. N. W. Taylor and Bennet Tyler, for all their differences, shared this theological habit of passing directly from the saga of the Fall and Redemption of man to the assumption of the same formal pattern in the temporal process of salvation in the life of an individual or a community. Edwards himself had not made that transition so naively: his own wife was accepted as a church member although she could remember no such distinct experience of conversion.

The pin-pointing of crisis. As contrasted with the general heritage emphasizing the importance of experiencing one's regeneration, the revivalism of both Finney and Tyler so focused attention upon a definite moment of crisis experience as to equate it with the whole of regeneration. For Tyler's group it was the moment of conversion.

Finney moved away from this, to regard the moment of

conversion as only the crucial beginning of regeneration. To be completed, this must be followed by sanctification, although in his own case both seemed to have happened at once. But when he developed his doctrine of "entire sanctification" (or perfection) he made of it a second concentrated experience like that of conversion. Thus, while Finney regarded the whole of regeneration as being more than the content of the moment of conversion experience, he had simply divided it in two, and had no genuine process of salvation in his view any more than Tyler had in his.

New Measures Necessary To Save Revivalism

Failure of the old methods.--The impotence of the older methods was not admitted by Nettleton, but was illustrated by his failures after 1826, and particularly in 1831 in New York City and Newark. After the latter disappointing occasion W. Brown wrote Finney, "I do not know that anybody regrets his departure."[1] Finney had already tired of waiting for the old methods to produce results, and was engaged with spectacular success in putting new wine into the old skin of revivalism under the guise of supplying new skins for the old wine.

Results of the new methods.--The innovations in revival technique introduced on a wide scale by Finney made

1. W. Brown to Charles Finney, April 3, 1831 (Charles G. Finney Papers, Oberlin College Library).

those which Emmons once had criticized on Nettleton's part look pale. They set off a flurry of controversy, coming to a head in the debate over Finney during the thirties. It issued in the permanent splitting of the Presbyterian Church in 1837, the year after Finney left the Presbyterian fold for "the democracy of Congregationalism."[2]

He introduced the use of a protracted series of meetings during the course of a revival, preceded by a study of the local situation beginning with individual conferences. In his preaching he would name specific local evils and pray for individuals by name. He shocked many of his contemporaries by allowing women to pray aloud in public. Particularly effective was the inauguration of the "anxious seat" -- a bench at the front upon which were seated those undergoing "serious thoughts" and the conviction of sin but who had not yet surrendered their wills to the mercy of God. One can well imagine the pressure under which such persons were put at they sat under the watchful scrutiny of the full assemblage with their status so labeled. A related feature was the provision of a room adjacent to the meeting hall where the evangelist and his "Holy Band" could assist the potential convert in his praying and his wrestling with self-will.

2. George F. Wright, Charles Grandison Finney (Boston and New York, 1891), p. 266.

The effectiveness of the new measures in producing revivals was demonstrated in the "burnt-over" district of upper New York State, where Finney began his first dramatic series of revivals in 1826. The name derived from the fact that this same area was swept again and again by successive waves of revivals under the impetus of the new measures. To a lesser degree the same results attended Finney's preaching elsewhere, including his several years in New York City.

Nettleton hoped desperately to prove that the old approach could yield as abundant a harvest as that produced in the West, but with the new revivalism on the scene he was unable to hold the interest even of the faithful. He died a forgotten man fifteen years after Lyman Beecher had called him "one of the greatest benefactors God has ever given to this nation." Beecher had revised his opinion in the meantime.[3]

Doctrinal Changes Necessary To the New Methods

The new measures required certain modifications in doctrine toward greater stress on man's voluntary act as an essential part of conversion, and Finney was quite ready to undertake such changes with full recognition that he was doing so.

3. Lyman Beecher quoted in Asahel Nettleton, **Temperance and Revivals** (Boston, n. d.), p. 1.

Free Will and Human Agency in Conversion

The reality of the agency of man in his own conversion was extended further in the direction illustrated by Hopkins and Emmons. N. W. Taylor, himself a revival preacher before becoming the first professor of theology at the Yale Divinity School, laid the basis for the New School's doctrines by including in his attempt to restate orthodoxy a frank assertion of the freedom and self-generating power of the human will. Finney also was a beneficiary of the Puritan autonomous "light of reason" which was a prominent part of Taylor's philosophical baggage. Finney's declaration that revivals are a human feat stemmed from his own revival experiences rather than directly from Taylor's theology. But it was part of the same air that Taylor breathed, and Taylor's theology expressed Finney's convictions better than any other in his early period. He had refused to go to Princeton as his tutor, George W. Gale, wanted him to do.

Finney held that the Holy Spirit is the divine agent in conversion; but God is always ready and willing to act to this end. It is man's will which blocks the agency of the Spirit by voluntarily holding to evil. The Spirit overcomes this human obstacle by persuasion only, by presenting the truth. The evangelist is the Spirit's channel and agent in this work of persuasion, by virtue of the evangelist's

will to act as such.[4]

Experience As Justification for New Doctrines

It is significant that the source of these doctrinal insights for Finney and the justification for modifying current doctrines was not reference to any past standard or tradition. He referred instead to the apparent implications of his own experience in his conversion and in conducting revivals.

Finney's conversion experience. During Finney's childhood his family had moved from Warren, in Litchfield County, Connecticut, where he was born in 1792. They settled on the frontier in Oneida County, New York, whose settlers came largely from that same area of New England. Although the community seems not to have lacked the usual church life, Finney could not recall any mention of religion at all in his parents' home throughout his youth. His memory was often inaccurate, and he may not have reported this fairly. His conversion experience in 1821, at any rate, was a dramatic reversal for him. It began with the procuring of a Bible in which he secretively looked up Biblical references which had aroused his curiosity while studying Blackstone's volumes on common law in the office of the local lawyer.

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4. Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney (New York, 1876), p. 135.

At the climax of the few days of intense inner struggle which followed rapidly upon this beginning, Finney found that he no sooner quit "holding out against the Spirit" than he was completely overcome by feelings attesting to his justification before God. In the same moment in which he had surrendered his will, he became unable to feel any guilt, feeling instead only what he described as successive "waves of liquid love" sweeping through his whole being.[5]

Finney's early experience as an evangelist. All that was lacking which was necessary for conversion was for a man to give up his false pride and surrender himself to the Spirit, Finney was convinced. The notion that one could not voluntarily do so at any time was, in Finney's eyes, simply an excuse cast up for not willing to take the step. It was therefore not a glorification of God but a manifestation and rationalization of the sinner's voluntary pride and attachment to the world.

During his revivals Finney found that, when he went through the careful process of explaining this to others and trying to convince them of its truth, they were convinced in droves. Once convinced and on the "anxious bench" it was but a matter of time before they repented, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the sufficient propitiation for their guilt,

5. Ibid., pp. 14-21.

and joining the ranks of the disinterestedly benevolent. It was expected that this renewal of inward righteousness of life would express itself in joyful, energetic and dedicated work for causes such as missions and moral reform in society. Finney was cautious in evaluating conversions, keeping a watchful eye open against spurious conversions which were nothing but emotional seizures or general excitation of feeling without the fruit of steadfast love.

Finney's innovating conservatism in theology. Finney modified only those doctrines which conflicted with the experientially validated methods necessary to preserve revivalism. Thus, he freely discarded every suggestion of man's inability to accept the truth of the gospel. He opposed excessive stressing of man's physical depravity and had no use for constitutional regeneration. At the same time, he inveighed against Antinomianism, Universalism and Unitarianism, and retained his belief in the inevitable selfishness of human nature under original sin, the moral government of God, a literal hell, and in the substitutionary atonement. The latter two doctrines did not bother him in the slightest. They could be handled under the traditional Edwardsian-Hopkinsian treatment, which stressed divine law in the cosmos: if the cosmic structure of the Good is so clearly knowable by man, then God is readily seen to be justified in damning souls when it is necessary for

the sake of the good of all being.

In the moral realm, Finney and his associates had a tremendous drive to order all things wholly in accordance with God's laws. Despite his emphasis upon moral and intellectual freedom, however, Finney was not a prototype of the theological liberal. For that he lacked the liberal's corresponding intellectual drive for breadth and inclusiveness in addition to internal consistency and coherence.

If the drive for intellectual integration had been as strong in the New School evangelists as was their drive for moral integration, they might have survived the change in world view which was already in process when they began their work. It might have produced a more enduring theology than liberalism with its progressive confusion of grace with nature and theology with science. On the other hand, its own presuppositions about sin and man's moral self-determination would probably have produced liberalism in time if they had been combined with a drive for intellectual integration. As it was, the New School was not in danger of becoming liberal. The new world view increasingly centered about science. It presupposed both change and continuity in all things. The new revivalism continued to presuppose no change where there was change and radical discontinuity wherever change was recognized. The new moral and world views eventually made their most dramatic

impact upon the currents of thought with the rise of natural and moral evolution to the center of intellectual attention beyond academic circles. A crisis was thereby raised for revivalism which could only be met by total resistance on *a priori* grounds.

The Unimportance of Education in the Process of Salvation

The new revivalism tended to turn the conversion-experience side of the Puritan heritage against its emphasis upon an educated ministry, despite the assumption that grace was a matter of right beliefs which the emotions drive to enactment under the direction of the will. The training of an evangelist required no attempt to cultivate the mind's powers. Education is quite dispensible to the task of producing conversions and leading Christians in a new life. The view that education was even a hindrance to the propagation of the gospel was expressed by Methodist frontier evangelist Peter Cartwright with particular vigor. Cartwright shared much with the Finney group in theological presuppositions and revival technique. The "new measures" are said to have originated in Methodist churches on the frontier, although little noticed by others until Finney popularized them. Even after becoming president of Oberlin, Finney played down the importance of education. This note was heard less as time went on, however, and he later tended to alter his preaching style too much toward

the side of erudition and sophistication to suit many of his followers.

The equation of the process of regeneration with a sudden moral change at the moment of conversion is reflected in this attitude. The instruction of the converted seemed a minor matter so far as salvation itself was concerned. The "light of reason" in man is sufficient for an understanding of the beliefs upon which conversion rests. The mind needs no special training or intellectual skills in order to apprehend the plain truths of the Bible. Regeneration had been condensed to a point change in moral inclination. Right belief will lead surely to conversion, but the obstacle in the way of conversion is the will which shuts out truth from the mind. Once the simple truth enters the mind it will guide the will adequately, and the problem of evil in the self is no more. Before that point, the factors in the way of the apprehension of truth are moral and not intellectual. The quest for religious understanding is important only during the conversion struggle, since it is fruitless until the crisis begins and unnecessary after it is over.

This de-emphasis of education did not take the form of a consistent anti-intellectualism like that of James Davenport. Both Finney and Cartwright were in fact intellectually vigorous and argumentative men. Finney

became the head of an educational enterprise, which had risen to national and international reputation under his leadership by the 1850's. In his evangelism he strove first to convince men's minds before calling their sympathies to the fore, and habitually restrained his almost hypnotic oratorical powers to prevent emotions from outrunning the mind. Even Cartwright, for all of his bellicose denunciation of the "sapient, velvet-mouthed, downy D. D.'s" of the East and his insistence on the superiority of the accomplishments of ignorant Methodist preachers like himself who "murdered the king's English almost every lick," helped to found schools on the frontier and regretted his own lack of education during his youth.[6]

Individualism and the Power of the Evangelist's Personality

By centering so much of the driving agency of the process of salvation in the personal-charismatic leadership of the evangelist, the new revival methods gave a further impetus to the already large degree of individualism inherant in the revivalistic view of the process. The rationale of the new revivalism credited the Spirit with the agency which was channeled through the evangelist. In practice it was readily recognized that, despite Finney's theories on the matter, not everyone could will to act as the Spirit's channel

6. Peter Cartwright, Autobiography (New York, 1856), pp. 408, 6 f.

with the stupendous effectiveness required to excite a mass revival. Increasing importance was attached to the evangelist's unique ability to perform feats bordering upon the uncanny. Religious effectiveness rested upon a relationship to the evangel which tended to be ingeniously contrived rather than intrinsic. Personal charisma was thus always in danger of degenerating into its pseudo-charismatic perversion. In a highly individualistic age, religious excellence can all too easily be identified with sheer individuality.

Charles Finney.--Despite his efforts to restrain the exercise of his powers of this sort Finney did not see individualism as an important religious danger. His ministry contributed to the individualistic trend of the times. The awesome reputation generated by his revivals in Western New York lent awe to his mere presence even before he began to speak. His bold, dramatic revival activities at public affairs such as dances exhibited a brashness and daring secretly envied by many a more timid soul and openly lauded by his admirers. The testimonies of the latter are rarely without awed references to the discomforting and hypnotic effect of Finney's piercing eyes. To follower and foe alike, they were a force to be reckoned with, especially in the individual conferences of which he made so much use.

Peter Cartwright. -The extraordinary features of Cart-

wright's evangelistic activity fit well with the rugged manhood so valued on the frontier. The same boldness which Finney possessed was illustrated in such ventures as turning a dance into a prayer meeting when he himself was a total stranger.[7] A striking figure with a huge head and amazing physical strength, he boasted of the many times that he supplemented his verbal battles against the devil with fist fights and wrestling matches in the same cause. Challenged to a duel on one such occasion, he availed himself of the privilege of the challenged party to choose the weapons, and reduced his opponent to utter exhaustion with a corn stalk.

Lyman Beecher. Exhibitions of similar personal and physical vigor were no doubt even more effective in the East, where they were less common. Beecher kept an outdoor gymnasium in his back yard, upon which he kept physically trim while letting off steam after his intellectual and ecclesiastical exertions.[8] In Boston he once illustrated a sermon point throwing a tree trunk over the heads of his outdoor audience.[9]

While Beecher was widely regarded as a defender of orthodoxy because of his vigorous campaign against the

7. Ibid., pp. 207 ff.

8. Catherine Beecher to Edward Beecher, November 29, 1819, in Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, II, 113.

9. Milton Brayton to Charles Finney, May 18, 1827 (Finney Papers).

anathema of Unitarianism, his theological roots were fed as much by the stream of the New School as by the mediating stream of New Haven. He exercised great individual freedom in the choice of which doctrines to preach at various times and places, according to what emphasis seemed lacking in what his audience was accustomed to hear. If, in his judgement, they needed more stress on the freedom of human agency, he gave it to them with no qualifications or equivocation; if what they needed was more accent on divine sovereignty, then he gave them that, with both barrels.

The End of New School Revivalism

The victory of the new revivalism over the old was clearly presaged as early as 1827 at the New Lebanon convention, which Beecher was instrumental in calling. Indeed, despite the doctrinaire character of the Old School position, the issue was bound to be settled by an empirical test. On the Old School's own grounds the occurrence of a revival was the product of the sovereign will of God alone. Thus it had no possible basis for denying the validity of a revival so long as it bore the ear marks of a revival under the standards of recognition which both Schools shared. The simple fact that revivals increasingly occurred under the new methods and failed under the old sealed the demise of the Old School. The two streams gradually merged into one, on the new grounds, becoming a current within the varied

stream of conservative theology against which it had never been in radical protest.

With the continued change in the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, the conditions which had made the new measures so phenomenally successful died away, and with them the response to those methods. Beginning in the 1840's, a final decline in revivals set in, punctuated briefly by the last wave of revivals on a broad scale from 1857 to 1858. After that time revivalism continued in Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey and their colleagues. They were powerful evangelists, comparable to Finney himself. But the Moody revivals, beginning in 1860, never managed to sweep large percentages of whole towns and countrysides in the North.

The revivalistic movement increasingly tended to doctrinal rigidity and defensiveness. Revivalists of Moody's caliber disappeared from the scene by and large. Revivalism continued in men such as Torry, Chapman and Billy Sunday. Their revival techniques were ever more contrived and manipulative as time went on, and were dependent upon increasingly slick organization. Doctrinal innovation was no longer a possible response to any frustrations experienced in the drive for revivals. Although the doctrines of this movement did shift gradually with the passage of time, its spokesmen could no longer afford ever to admit that there had been any change in "the old-time religion."

CHAPTER IV

HORACE BUSHNELL AND PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY

The Process of Salvation As Christian Nurture

A New View of the Essentials of Orthodoxy

Horace Bushnell reacted against the view of the process of salvation held by both old and new revivalism. He rejected that view and formulated a genuinely new conception of the process. Bushnell's concept of "Christian nurture" was his primary systematic statement of this reinterpretation of the nature of the process of salvation. The validity of revivals was not denied, in view of the inadequate provision for Christian nurture prevalent at the time. Under the conditions of sound Christian nurture revivals might have some place, but only as gentle tides of new religious feeling. What Bushnell strove to expose was the vicious effect he felt revivalism had on the churches when relied upon as the normal or exclusive pathway by which salvation comes to men.

His reinterpretation of the process of salvation stands at the center of his theological work. As it matured, this work emerged as an effort to achieve a more fundamental reinterpretation of orthodoxy than had been undertaken by his teacher, N. W. Taylor. Taylor's system was not so much a reinterpretation as a restate-

ment in nineteenth-century terms of the heritage of modified Edwardsian orthodoxy, particularly so far as his intention was concerned. The basis for Bushnell's reinterpretation was provided by the romantic movement which so deeply penetrated and shaped the thought world of the century.

Bushnell's work began to attract attention with the publication of his views on the Trinity in 1838. This was twelve years after the beginning of Finney's revivals in Western New York and before Finney had yet systematized his views with any great degree of thoroughness. Bushnell's thought did not gain its widest appreciation until the 1880's, after his death. In the late forties and early fifties he came under concerted attack by representatives of both the old and new varieties of revivalism, including Tyler and Finney. These men both failed to understand his thought, let alone agree with it. Most of their criticisms -- unlike those of Hodge -- were irrelevant as stated. He spoke a different theological language from theirs. His thought later contributed heavily to the liberal theology of later American Congregationalists like T. T. Munger, Newman Smyth and Washington Gladden.

The Continuity of the Process

Revivalism stressed the discontinuity involved in salvation. Bushnell so emphasized the continuity of preconversion life with post-conversion life that conversion itself tended to be distributed throughout a continuous life-long process of change. The process will be

marked by stages, and even crises, but each stage will be continuous with all that has gone before it. While a change will have occurred in a Christian's life which he can recognize as a conversion, he may never be able to identify a precise time when the change took place. This is the ideal of Christian nurture, "That the child grow up a Christian, and never knowing himself as being otherwise".[1]

Growth. Bushnell's fondness for the metaphor of growth in describing the process indicates the characteristic combination of dynamism and continuity in his outlook. The continuity which he saw in the process was of a complex sort, in which there is a persistence of identity through change but not the uniformity of inevitable progress. This continuity will not be found primarily by inspecting the external phenomena of a life history. The discerning eye of faith will discover its traces there among its contradictions, but it is discerned more surely at a deeper level, by introspection into the internal history of the Christian. The basic continuity found there is not that of uniformity in spiritual

1. Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (New York: Charles Scribner, 1863), p. 22.

vigor or direction. This internal dimension of life is the scene of fierce turbulence and counteraction. The continuity is that of a drama. The basic theme develops and establishes itself through the dramatic action of advance and reversal -- of interlude as well as crisis.

Against the excessive revivalistic emphasis on discontinuity Bushnell instinctively sought a stronger metaphor than that of drama to express continuity. Yet his thought required that the note of contingency and variation be preserved. He therefore reached out spontaneously to the vitalistic and organic conception of growth.

While inorganic growth, such as that of a crystal, is a matter of simple accretion at varying rates, living growth is characterized by interrelated changes in a manifold of dimensions rather than simple linear change. It is assessed by increase in function and complexity as well as in size -- by maturation. Furthermore, it is precarious in subtler ways than mere reversibility. It proceeds continually or the organism dies. Yet it proceeds always in tenuous balance with the possibility of permanent stultification, deformity or destruction should any of the numerous components of the whole growth process become disordered or cease to

grow in their own right. The continuity of such a process embraces and assimilates discontinuity rather than denying it.

While he drew heavily upon the general organic concept of growth, it was human growth -- and particularly as found in his own experience -- which served as the fundamental model for his concept of the process of regeneration. The development of his own life in Christian faith was strikingly like that which he traced as the pattern of Christian nurture. This personal experience gave him confidence that an extended continuity of regenerative growth could and should be characteristic of the subjective side of the process of salvation. All that is necessary is that parents and church do what is actually within their power by way of providing appropriate nurture for the growth of faith in its various stages.

In a different way from Finney, Bushnell thus asserted that human effort (in providing such appropriate nurture) plays a real and crucial role in the process of salvation. Yet he felt it to be observably true that neither efforts at such nurture based upon natural parental altruism toward the child nor the moral effort of the developing Christian himself are sufficiently stable and free from sin to account for such a contin-

uity in the last analysis. All of the real and effective continuity which is there is actually rooted in the constancy of purpose of the Divine strategy itself, and in the manner in which that strategy has been devised and effected by God in Christ for the salvation of men.[1] Christian nurture is thus not based upon calculated human techniques which are certain to produce the desired results. The fruitfulness of human efforts to nurture faith is the result of God's incorporation of the powerful influence of Christ into the very fabric of a human community. The nurturing of faith is only possible for those who are inside the life of the community of faith in some real sense.

The working of such an influence will necessarily take time. The unconscious molding of a person's character by the direct impact of another person's Christian character is basic to the later achievement of doctrinal understanding. The working out of salvation being thus extended in time, a true process exists, in contrast to the revivalistic view of salvation. The flow of experience provided within the framework of the process presents itself as something to be

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1. Horace Bushnell, "Salvation by Man" in Sermons on Christ and His Salvation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), chap. xiii, pp. 274 f.

respected and observed by the theologian as containing the real activity of both the individual and God in relationship. Finney had adopted such an attitude toward the experience concentrated in the crucial movements of conversion and sanctification. With the whole flow of religious experience throughout life included in the process of salvation, Bushnell could press farther. He regarded this experience as the proper datum for the study of theology and the source of both direction and confirmation for the whole body of Christian doctrine.

Sociality. One of the most striking features of Bushnell's whole thought is the consistent presence of the social dimension as a basic ingredient of everything human -- and indeed of everything in the cosmos. There is nothing discernible by the mind of man which is not significantly interrelated with everything else. The growth of the individual in the process of salvation is thus set inextricably within a context of social relationships. Upon these it is dependent for its existence, and through them it derives its continuity.

In order to stress the depth and strength of this social connection of human lives over against the extreme individualism of the revivalistic view of sal-

vation, Bushnell again turned to the sub-rational sphere of biological phenomena for a metaphor. The concept of an organism stood out as particularly apt for this purpose. Furthermore a venerable tradition reaching into the New Testament itself stood behind the use of that metaphor for the interconnection of the believer's relation to Christ with his relation to his fellow believers. This was both a comfort and a polemical aid to Bushnell, although it is hardly likely that it would have bothered him for an instant had it not been the case.

In a living organism a multiplicity of parts exist and function in a fundamental unity supplied by the more inclusive life process of the whole. The parts -- cells or organs -- possess a genuine identity and life of their own and a kind of independence. Each has functions and structure different from one another and from the whole organism. Yet their individual life processes are thoroughly interdependent. The whole organism has a life of its own which is not just the collection of the individual life processes of the component parts. Yet that life could not exist without its parts any more than they without the whole.

Taken as a metaphor for a human society, the organismic concept places great stress upon the contin-

uity of the life and activity of the individual with that of the whole because it focuses upon the organism rather than on the parts. The danger in its use -- particularly when extended into an analogy -- lies in its tendency to submerge the individual to the point of relative unimportance as compared with the larger or smaller group which is taken as the social unit. It may thus deny to the individual any substantial reality.

To Bushnell, living in a period whose climate was intensely individualistic, this danger was a pale one, if, indeed, he even recognized it. He criticized the "priestly forms of Christianity" not for their dangerous use of the organic analogy but for the externality of their sacramental conception of the operation of grace.[1] The age of revivalism received his heaviest criticism, and he saw its lack of any sense of organic connection in society as its primary fault:

> Considered as a distinct era, introduced by Edwards, and extended and caricatured by his contemporaries, it has one great merit, and one great defect. The merit is that it displaced an era of dead formality, and brought in the demand of a truly supernatural experience. The defect is that it has cast a type of religious individualism, intense beyond any former example.[2]

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 114 f.

2. Ibid., p. 187.

As a result of this general "bent toward individualism":

> ... we have well nigh lost ... the idea of organic powers and relations. The state, the church, the family, have ceased to be regarded as such, according to their proper idea, and become mere collections of units. A national life, a church life, a family life, is no longer conceived, or perhaps conceivable, by many. In stead of being wrought in together and penetrated, to some extent, by historic laws and forces common to all members, we only seem to lie as seeds piled together, without any terms of connection, save accident of proximity, or the fact that we all belong to the heap. And thus the three great forms of organic existence, which God has appointed for the race, are in fact lost out of mental recognition. [1]

It is these same organic forms, with their penetrating laws and forces, which make regeneration by Christian nurture possible as a process of continuous growth. These "organic powers God has constituted as vehicles of grace."[2] Finney's view concentrated the operation of grace in the mediacy of intellectual and voluntary human interaction and association. Bushnell saw grace operative first of all through connections at the deep level of organic unity of citizens with the life of the state, of members with the life of the church, and even more of children with the life of the family -- which "is the church of childhood."[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 91.
2. Ibid., p. 187.
3. Ibid., pp. 19 f.

Christian nurture does not happen automatically, without volitional intent, as we shall see; but its medium is the whole content of the religious experience of the Christian, and not simply the conscious and volitional phases of that experience.

The Primacy of Religious Experience in the Process

Continuity and religious experience. The primacy given to religious experience in Bushnell's view of the process of salvation together with his closely related emphasis upon the continuity of the process reveals the extent to which these two basic motifs of American theological liberalism already were incipient in Bushnell's progressive version of orthodoxy. The continuity of the regenerative process from childhood naivete through mature faith cannot be based upon doctrinal concepts held by believers. These by their very nature are relatively advanced accomplishments. The flow of religious experience on the other hand, taken in a broad definition, is continuous throughout a life span. It thus qualifies as nothing else can to serve as the anchorage for such a continuous view of the process.

In his combination of these two elements to operate as the basic presuppositions of his conception of the process of salvation, Bushnell may be called the father of American theological liberalism in much

the same sense as Schleiermacher may be regarded as its European father. Every significant exponent of that movement seems to have been heavily inclined to stress continuity as the prime feature of the pattern followed by history -- both personal and cosmic. For most later liberal theologians the concept of evolution provided the explicit interpretive idea for this pattern. The conflict between such a view and that of revivalistic orthodoxy did not actually center about such stated issues as Biblical inerrancy. It centered in the deeper conflict of the liberal assumption of continuity with revivalism's assumption of fundamental discontinuity, in the creation of the world by divine fiat at an instant of time and in the re-creation of the individual at the moment of a distinct conversion experience.

Admiration of the accomplishments of the natural sciences may well have been the key to this preference for continuity in the larger scheme of things. Knowledge in the sciences of nature rests upon the assumption that -- within the scientist's province of concern, at any rate -- nature changes through a continuous process in which discontinuities are never radical. Such changes as occur in nature must be ordered according to (or subsumable under) laws of causal-

ity which are themselves never discontinually suspended. Natural science has no instruments or concepts for the measurement of radical discontinuity as opposed to ordered change.

The continuous flow of religious experience seemed to some later theologians, as to Bushnell, to hold the promise of providing the sort of data which theology could subject to methodical inquiry much as the continuous and orderly change of natural processes could be investigated by the empirical methods of the sciences of nature. In the twentieth century, liberal theologians would even make the experiment of constructing a theological methodology as like as possible to the specific method of empirical investigation employed in the physical sciences.

Bushnell's interest in the physical sciences, and especially chemistry, was his primary one for a period during college and was retained later. Yet his theological viewpoint was much different from the scientism of much later liberalism. The role of natural science in the formation of his viewpoint was a crucial one only in so far as the need to accept the validity of knowledge in that field posed the basic problem which the romantic movement of which he was a part sought to solve in its world-view. Instead of making their peace with science

by adopting its methods and accepting the limitations thus imposed upon a world-view, the pioneers of the liberal movement like Bushnell chose the general direction of transcendentalism.

The conflict was resolved by distinguishing two spheres of reality having different natures but equal ontological status: nature and the supernatural. The approach to knowledge in each realm was empirical, centering in the inspection of the data presented by experience. But experience itself was distinguished into two different kinds. Knowledge of the natural world was gained through sense-experience. Knowledge of the supernatural realm of religion and morality was to be found through the experience of moral sentiment -- of feeling and passion. Bushnell emphasized that nature and the supernatural were united in a single system under God's governance. The whole system is the vehicle of the divine strategy in the redemption of man; but each realm has its own distinctive laws of operation, and hence its own appropriate method of inquiry.[1]

The influence of Bushnell's religious experience upon his soteriology. When Bushnell reflected upon his own religious experience

1. This idea is the theme of Horace Bushnell, Nature and the Supernatural (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858), which was completed early in the controversy over Darwinian evolution and German criticism. However, it merely developed the line of thought begun in 1832 while still a student at the Yale Divinity School, to which effect he is quoted in Mary Bushnell Cheney (ed.), Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), p. 64.

he found there a deep continuity, beginning with its rootage in the implicit Christian faith which surrounded his home life during childhood and youth. By its very nature such a continuity will not be identified with a distinct event in time. It will be discerned by virtue of the very difficulty in identifying any specific time of its coming or its absence.

Finney's reflection upon his religious crisis experience confirmed the pattern of discontinuity which he took to be normative. Bushnell's reflection upon the three primary crises in his religious experience seemed to him to confirm instead the significance of the continuity which transcended these crises.

At the age of eighteen he had an experience containing all of the elements of conscious conviction of sin, repentance, awareness of forgiveness in Jesus, and voluntary commitment to personal moral perfection expected by revivalistic orthodoxy. This had issued in Bushnell's joining the church, his devoting himself energetically to religious work for a time, and finally his decision to go to college after all with the intention of entering the ministry.[1] Despite this experience -- or perhaps because of its character -- he experienced repeated inability to live up to the moral perfection

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1. Cheney, Bushnell, p. 21.

to which he had committed himself. At Yale he experienced the gradual evaporation of his doctrinal convictions under the cold and detached rationalism of the Paleyite temper which he "loved a good deal."[1]

This first religious crisis seems to have had considerable negative influence upon Bushnell's mature view of the process of salvation. Its failure to provide a basis for a stable Christian life and faith in his own case must be accounted one of the primary factors behind his consistent polemic against the desirability of relying upon this type of conversion experience as normative.

His second crisis experience was the one which he regarded as most nearly a conversion. Yet it seemed on reflection to be essentially a start at recovery of the same faith which had been quietly growing during his childhood and youth. He was convinced that this underlying faith had actually never been abrogated during his years of intellectual skepticism over the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement and even over the existence of God. Throughout that period he had hoped that time would eventually disclose a solution to these intellectual problems. He had never tried to influence

1. Ibid., p. 41.

his fellow students -- or, later, his pupils -- to share his doubts. He remained a church member and set an example of moral responsibility in his quiet regularity at chapel and college functions and his observance of college rules.

His leap back to conscious faith came before he found an intellectual solution to his doubts. It came under the impact of his life-long sense of moral responsibility for others. He had returned to Yale as a tutor and law student after a sojourn as a country school teacher and then as editor of the Journal of Commerce in New York. He found that his aloofness to the quiet revival which was gradually quickening the life of Yale College during the winter of 1831 was insulating his students, who hung on his every word, not only from the beliefs of the others but from their quality of earnestness. This situation precipitated a personal crisis, in which he moved from recognition of the indubitability of the distinction between right and wrong to intense prayer to the dimly-perceived God who is righteous if He exists at all. This was followed by a flood of feeling in which a direct encounter with the active presence of God seemed to come in answer to his cry for help because it was so deeply meant. The experience dissolved the worst of his doubts: "A being

so profoundly felt must inevitably be."[1] This being so, his remaining intellectual doubts could wait. He was confident that he now had a basis upon which they would eventually be resolved.

The intellectual groundwork for the basis found in this experience had been laid by a return to the thought of Coleridge. He had found Coleridge intriguing but largely unintelligible during his college days but now found him rewarding:

> For a whole half year I was buried under his 'Aids to Reflection,' and trying vainly to look up through. I was quite sure that I saw a star glimmer, but I could not quite see the stars. My habit was only landscape before; but now I saw enough to convince me of a whole other world somewhere overhead, a range of realities in higher tier, that I must climb after, and, if possible, apprehend. Shortly after, a very strong lift in my religious experience came as a waft upon my inspirations, to apprise me more distinctly of their existence, and of the two-world range that belonged to me.[2]

To his fellow tutors, whose meetings for prayer he had joined, he described the anchorage which he had found in romantic terms:

> O men! what shall I do with these arrant doubts I have been nursing for years? When the preacher touches the Trinity and when logic shatters it all to pieces, I am all at the four winds. But I am glad I have a heart as well as a head. My heart wants the Father; my heart wants the Son; my heart wants the Holy Ghost -- and one just as much as the other. My heart says the Bible has a Trinity for me, and I mean to hold by my heart. I am glad a man can do it when there is no other mooring, and so I answer my own question, What shall I do? But that is all I can do yet.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 59.
2. Ibid., p. 205.
3. Ibid., p. 56.

Two features of Bushnell's remarks deserve particularly to be noted here. The first is that the religious experience through which he had passed was itself seen as having the power to convey and clarify insights which had doctrinal significance. Secondly, such a "mooring" later provided a theoretical framework for understanding the fundamental continuity of his non-conceptual childhood religious training with his mature religious ideas by virtue of the religious affections which underlay both of them. He could not regard his "conversion experience" as a reversal of his youthful direction in this regard, but only of his direction during the intervening years -- and that to a limited extent.

His third crisis experience served even more to underline the continuity in regeneration which he felt. Although it was so intense that he felt ecstatically transported, yet it seemed to him to contain no element of reversal at all, but rather the feeling of being suddenly lifted to a higher plane of insight which transformed his previous understanding in the same direction in which it had been pressing already. This experience his wife called the central point in his life. Bushnell described it as a "personal discovery of Christ, and of God as represented in Him."[1] It also seemed to him in

1. Theodore T. Munger, Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), pp. 113 f.

part a transition from the law to the gospel, although he felt that he had never been very legalistic in his Christian life.[1] This crisis occurred in 1848, after fifteen years as a pastor -- ten years after the publication of his controversial views on the Trinity, and a year after the first publication of the Discourses on Christian Nurture. Yet its revelatory content was one which belongs inevitably to any Christian's regeneration. It issued in the writing of the three discourses set forth in God in Christ. In these he portrayed "Christ as the indwelling, formative life of the soul, the new creating power of righteousness for humanity."[2] It was after this experience that he began explicitly to define theology as "formulated Christian experience."[3]

Thereafter Bushnell found his view of the process of salvation to be articulated to his satisfaction. He revised Christian Nurture through successive editions, expanding it with a few new arguments countering his critics, but the basic pattern remained the same. The internal and external histories of both individual men and nations follow the basic pattern of growth. This growth is punctuated by crises in which past advance may either be transformed into something creatively new

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 114.
3. Ibid., p. 115.

on a whole new plane of possibility or else lost and perverted by failure to respond to the crisis when it is presented. Regeneration proceeds in this fashion throughout a lifetime, and cannot be fully completed on earth. Bushnell looked forward to his own death as the last great crisis which would complete the process of his salvation.

Christian Nurture's New Methods

Bushnell's new conception of the process of salvation required the adoption of methods of evangelism which were more radically new than Finney's "new measures." His methods gave particular stress to the crucial beginnings of the process in childhood. He gave to these methods the name Christian nurture, suggested by the New Testament injunction to fathers regarding their children that they "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."[1]

The Direct Impact of Character on Character

Nurture precedes admonition. Bushnell's exegesis of this scriptural passage put the emphasis upon nurture rather than admonition. The revivalism which Bushnell had known as a child had stressed chastening and doctrinal instruction in its exegesis of this passage and in its practice in the

1. Eph. 6:4.

raising of children in Christian homes. Under this view it was considered an ineluctible implication of serious belief in original sin that the life of a child before conversion be considered perverse beyond any human power to aid or rectify it. Christian parents were thus, in the views of many, to treat their children as sinners standing under God's wrath and condemnation. They were obligated to uphold God's law to the child by chastising him for such childish behavior as playing, limited powers of concentration, and lack of adult responsibility. This discipline was combined with intensive formal catechization. This would provide grounds for hope that when the inscrutable finger of God moved in the child's heart as he came to the age of belief he would achieve a conscious recognition of his sin. He then would be prepared for the offer of grace and forgiveness which would reverse his moral direction when a revival came.

Finney's innovations had not attempted to alter these aspects of the pattern. He boldly asserted that even the child's will is free to resist or accept grace at any time. But his methods centered in the persuasive power of the spirit's presentation of the truth, through the evangelist. The affections played a significant role in this process; but it still presup-

posed the development of sufficiently adult intellectual capacity to permit understanding of the truth which was being presented.

The presuppositions and the techniques of nurture. By his use of the word "nurture" in a way which emphasized its biological connotations Bushnell made the basic beginnings of the process no more beyond the capacities of the child than eating and breathing. The incorporation of the grace in Christ into the very fabric of organic family relationships constitutes "a power that is more than influence." Influence is primarily a matter of conscious and conceptual persuasion. The regenerative or destructive force applied through membership in a family works by the direct impact of character upon character in the daily conduct of the ordinary business of living.[1] Character is basically formed in this fashion rather than by rational choice. Its chief permanent directions are usually fixed during the early years of childhood -- although they are never entirely past redemption nor entirely secure from perversion or decay. This same growth of a Christian character is the fundamental content of regeneration. It is basic to a Christian's trust in God and to his mature beliefs.

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 82.

Conscious parental training will thus aim, as Bushnell's own mother had, at developing in the child habits of "industry, order, time, fidelity, reverence, neatness, truth, intelligence, prayer" as a foundation for a developing Christian life.[1] This will be accomplished less by continually advocating such habits than by consistently living them. They must form the atmosphere of the home in all of its internal activities and its relations to the community outside -- whether in work, worship or play. Christian nurture thus recaptured an important note of earlier historic Christian thought, which understood the significance of habit as a basis for Christian virtues. Yet it also clearly anticipated the rather confused "character-education" approach of a later generation of religious educators. Discipline plays an important role in Christian nurture, as Bushnell conceived it. It will not be primarily chastisement aimed at producing the conviction of sin, but rather an evocative discipline which seeks to curb the disorder of the self under original sin by surrounding it with healthy life which has been set in order by the grace of Christ. If parents are to succeed in this they must assume the possibility of succeeding.

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1. Cheney, Bushnell, p. 29.

The Use of the Full Range of Life and Experience in Community

While early nurture is of the greatest importance, Christian nurture includes every period of life. As maturity increases its form will shift toward the volitional and intellectual aspects of growth. It will utilize at every point the kinds of growth appropriate to the individual's stage of life. The rhythms of the intellectual and spiritual life are themselves instruments of the divine strategy of regeneration. The troughs play a positive role as well as the crests.

The organic channels of Christian nurture continue to play a crucial role throughout life, despite the lessening of the individual's dependence upon the wills of others for the direction of his life activity. Every respect in which an individual is related to the life of a community of faith by a real connection can be understood as an instrument of his evangelization by the faith which animates that community. While the natural unit of the family is most potent during childhood, it is basically the church which is the instrument of this process. The family is the child's primary organic link with the church, and thus it serves as the church of childhood.

The methods outlined in Christian Nurture thus

center intrinsically in the church. We shall see, however, that for Bushnell the church is not primarily an institution. It is a living community whose head and will is Christ, and which both claims and actually permeates the whole community of mankind in all of human activity. There is no organic relationship in human affairs -- family, state, and school as well as institutional church -- which has not become inevitably an instrument of either salvation or destruction to men with the entrance of Christ into the human race. The power of Christ can work through all of these organic forms by virtue of the interpenetration of such forms by one another in the human community, and thus the penetration of all of them by the church. Christian nurture utilizes them all, yet works out from the center which is the divine life of the church itself.

Theological Method as the Formulation of Christian Experience

A Revolution In Theological Method

Apologetics and the attitude toward doctrine.

As with Finney, Bushnell's new view of the process of salvation and of the methods of evangelism which belong to the process involved new doctrines and more suitable forms for old ones.

Two features especially distinguish Bushnell's case from that of Finney, however. In the first place, Bushnell had found doctrine to be a problem before he

began to formulate his method of evangelism. His methods attempted to head off the arising of doubt by shifting emphasis from doctrine to experience. Finney's modifications in doctrine were made not so much out of initial distaste for the rejected doctrines as in order to provide the necessary framework for his new methods. Right doctrine was recognized as a practical necessity since evangelism is a matter of presenting the full and authentic truth contained in the Bible. Bushnell was just as much concerned to maintain absolute loyalty to the eternal truth as was Finney, but he regarded its formulation as always relative and transitive. Bushnell was not aware of the important additional fact that the quest for theological truth had become, for him, a path which paralleled Scripture rather than one which proceeded from Scripture as a point of origin and which kept the origin always in sight to provide the traveller with his bearings.

Secondly, Bushnell's theological methodology represented a deliberate radical break with that of his predecessors. Finney might have shared that particular distinction had he paid more attention to the theological method which he employed in determining which doctrine to reject. As it was, he departed only sporadically from the prevailing assumptions in this department.

He was quite unaware of the fact when he did do so.

Bushnell's attitude toward tradition as a theological standard. The first flowering of the romantic movement in America combined with Bushnell's own peculiar genius to produce a deliberate reconstruction of his whole approach to theological issues. The reconstruction took much the same lines as that undertaken more systematically by Schleiermacher on the Continent and less systematically by Coleridge in England.

Both of these gifted thinkers influenced Bushnell. The new doctrinal positions which emerged from the employment of this methodology were actually at some points a return to an older orthodoxy than that which prevailed in Bushnell's day. This was especially true of his conception of the role of the church in the regeneration of the individual, as developed in Christian Nurture. T. T. Munger candidly points out that Bushnell was glad to find this out, and often used the fact in defense of his position, but that it was entirely incidental to his arrival at the conviction in his notion of Christian nurture until after he had published the theory.[1]

His remarks about the Trinity cited above illus-

1. Munger, Bushnell, p. 69.

trate the fact that he still had a deep attachment to the central orthodox doctrines of Christianity even where he could not yet find a lucid explanation of them. But he forthrightly rejected any attitude of positivism with respect to tradition -- including the tradition embodied in Scripture.[1] While studying under N. W. Taylor he had already begun to react against Taylor's technique of working out a theological position deductively from a set of definitions or from premises considered to be positively revealed in the literal form of Scripture, the whole result being taken for a precise and indisputable structure of theological truth. From that methodology sprang most of revivalism's faults and the church's multiplication of schisms, Bushnell felt.

A New View of the Relationship of Theology to Religious Experience

Religious experience as the basis for a mediating theology. Bushnell's own earlier writings exhibit a much more confident rationalism than do his later works. It never entirely disappeared, but his reaction against this temper was already present and grew steadily --almost as if by Christian nurture. Long before his

1. Infra, p. 157.

experience of 1848 his theological work was essentially the formulation of his own Christian experience. The method of formulation was increasingly one of introspection into that experience and of seeking to use language in such a way as to express adequately what he found there. Munger found it comforting to be able to report: "More than he himself was aware of, he departed from the Calvinistic standards, and pursued his way in a region where the heart and common sense prescribed both the path and the bounds."[1]

It is at the level of this method that Bushnell differed most radically not only from revivalistic orthodoxy but also from early Unitarianism. While these two movements were radically divided in position, they shared the same basic theological method to a large degree, except in the untypical case of Theodore Parker. It was as difficult for most of the Unitarians to understand Bushnell's retention of orthodox doctrines as it was for nearly everyone else to understand his defense of humanitarian principles. Bushnell was attempting to question and re-examine presuppositions which were shared by both sides of the Unitarian controversy, hoping to find a deeper level of meaning behind the accepted forms. He tried to mediate between the two

1. Munger, Bushnell, p. 73.

sides by presenting the experiencial roots of both positions.[1]

He had begun to work out this direction in 1833 when he first assumed his life-long pastorate of the North Congregational Church in Hartford with a congregation heatedly split between the New and the Old Schools. The extent to which he had both succeeded and failed over the years in that case is indicated by the loyalty of his still divided congregation to his leadership when he was under outside attack in 1852. A series of moves by the Fairfield West Association to induce Bushnell's Association to bring him to trial for heresy having failed, a last attempt was made to reach him through the Consociation. This could be done if

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1. A detailed discussion of Bushnell's technique and intentions in this mediation is contained in Harold R. Heininger, "The Theological Technique of a Mediating Theologian -- Horace Bushnell" (Private edition of unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago Libraries, 1935). Bushnell's mediating technique is well described as "a synthesis of the partial glimpses of truth seem by those who seem to be poles apart." However, Heininger is unaware of Bushnell's acquaintance with Hegel's thought and his contempt for it and all system-building, and thus finds the "Hegelian flavor" of Bushnell's method "evident." He is forced to account for the Hegelian influence which he wrongly assumes by the tenuous claim that Bushnell "indirectly acknowledges a debt" to Victor Cousin for the "ecclectic spiritualism" of Bushnell's article on "Christian Comprehensiveness" in Building Eras in Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), pp. 386 ff. Under Bushnell's method of argument he could be represented as "indebted" to anyone whose views he mentioned, by this standard of evidence, while his type of synthesis bears little resemblance beyond the formal to that of Hegel.

three members of his church could be found who would present him for trial, along with a certificate from the pastor of another church. Not a single member of his church would agree to do so, and in order to forestall any such move in the future the congregation voted unanimously to remove voluntarily from the Consociation.

The sources of Bushnell's emphasis upon religious experience. While Bushnell's conception of the relation of theology to religious experience was new, he owed much in this respect to a longstanding theological tradition in New England. Not least was he indebted to Jonathan Edwards,[1] whose contribution he explicitly recognized. The continuity between an Edwards and a Bushnell is often overlooked because of their marked differences on such issues as the freedom of the will. Yet when set against our own times, or even those of Washington Gladden, it becomes clear that neither man can be understood without a recognition of their mutual debt to the Puritan tradition. In that tradition Bushnell still stood to a degree which is remarkable considering the freedom with which he consciously discarded old traditions.

Important differences remain, however, between

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1. Supra, p. 95.

the place of experience in the theologies of Edwards and Bushnell. Some of them are related to the fact that Edwards' view belonged to the world of the British empiricists like Berkely, to whose philosophical system Edwards' apparently original views were so strikingly akin. The nature of Bushnell's treatment of religious experience as the basis of theology unmistakably reflects the post-Kantian world of philosophy. The methodology which Schleiermacher explicitly stated and defended, Bushnell employed, describing and defending it piecemeal throughout his writings: the business of theology is the examination, verbalization and understanding of the content of religious experience.[1]

The influence of Kant upon Schleiermacher had been direct, through his own study of Kant's writings, as well as through his intimate association with leaders of the early romantic movement such as Schlegel. Bushnell was typical of the beginnings of American romanticism in having received that impact almost entirely through the mediation of English thinkers. His direct knowledge of Kant seems to have been sparse, and apparently came late in his career. He was acquainted with Schlegel's transcendental theory of language, but rejected it as naive. He seems to have had little use for the German

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1. This method and its basis are most systematically and completely set forth as: Horace Bushnell, "Preliminary Dissertation on the Nature of Language as Related to Thought and Spirit" in God in Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907) (First published: Hartford, 1849), Part I, pp. 9-117.

springs of the romantic movement. A passage from a letter written in 1858 is illuminating on that score:

> This morning I took breakfast at Professor H. B. Smith's, where I met Shedd and Bancroft and others, who are more or less among the celebrities. They talked about Goethe, Kant, Jacobi, Schelling, Hegel, and other Germans, and we had a good time of it -- after we got through with the Germans. [1]

Somewhat more may be said of Schleiermacher's own influence upon Bushnell. Munger mentions Schleiermacher along with Coleridge as "the only writers who greatly influenced him."[2] Bushnell said that it had been a great encouragement to him to find a confirmation of the position on the Trinity which he had just worked out independently for himself in Schleiermacher's treatise on Sabellius, which had been translated shortly before by Professor Stuart.[3] Yet he rarely mentioned Schleiermacher. He seems to have recognized Schleiermacher primarily as a comfort after the fact. But Schleiermacher's work was known in his circles and may well have been more of a formative influence than Bushnell admitted in print. On the other hand Bushnell himself emphasized his debt to Coleridge, speaking of the Aids to Reflection as the

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1. Cheney, Bushnell, p. 414.
2. Munger, Bushnell, p. 209.
3. Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 111.

one book to which he was most indebted next to the Bible.[1]

In working out his theological method Bushnell was wrestling with Kant's problem. The results were strikingly parallel in some respects, especially in the rejection of speculative reason in favor of practical reason in dealing with ultimate problems of the moral and spiritual aspects of human life. Bushnell did not probe as deeply into the epistemological problem as did Kant. His thought is not quite as susceptible of an ultimate metaphysical idealism as Kant's, perhaps because it was not as profound. Kant understood the obstacle in the way of a contemporary epistemology to be the failure to recognize the fundamental agency of the structure of mind itself in the constitution of the objects of sense perception in conjunction with simple sensa.

Bushnell was not as explicit concerning the crucial influence of the agency of the nature of mind as such at that level in the knowing process. For him, the locus of the problem was language. Its root was the ontological dualism between nature and supernature in the external world which language signifies. The understanding of this dualism and of the nature of language in general supplies the key to the way in which theology

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1. Cheney, Bushnell, p. 499.

should use language in order to communicate its apprehension of spiritual realities such as selfhood, will, freedom and God.

A Clarification of the Relationship of Theology to Language

A criticism of speculative theology. Bushnell first began to formulate his answer to the problem under the compulsion to find adequate expression for the vision of the reality of the supernatural realm which he had newly found through his reading of Coleridge and through his own crisis experience of 1831. An article written in 1832 while a divinity student reflects his vigorous examination of the moral philosophy of the day, which ended in his rejection of its speculative approach. Such an approach might be fruitful, he argued, if not for the denaturing effect of sin:

> We may systematize in Nature, because Nature is a system, because everything there fulfills its end, and therefore acts in accordance with its fitness to that end; but we cannot systematize in morals, because a great share of the acts of men are in contradiction of those properties in their constitution which fit them to the end proposed by their existence; because they are the proper expressions only of a frustrating power, a power as effectual in dislocating systems as in defeating ends. Why, then, attempt to reconcile in philosophy, when there is war in facts? Why attempt to reduce to the harmony of the spheres the action and the being of man, when, if the spheres had sinned as man has, that harmony had been unheard even in the dreams of Pythagoras? 1

1. Bushnell, quoted in Cheney, Bushnell, p. 63.

The publication of his theory of language in 1849 made clear another reason for his criticism of the deductive methods of theological systems from Hopkins through Taylor in addition to the failure of such men to take into account the impact of sin upon their own rational efforts. The very nature of language itself requires that the communication of any moral or spiritual idea utilize a multiplicity of different formulations, each of which if taken alone without the others would be false and most often even directly contradictory to the others. The reason for this is revealed by the process through which Bushnell supposes language must have arisen.

The theology of language. Names for physical objects may be supposed to have arisen relatively easily. The objects themselves and the sensations associated with them are physically present as mediators between men. Pointing will serve adequately to define the referent of the name. This gave rise to the first and basic "department" of language. Originally this must have been a primitive "noun-language" consisting of a string of names. It would include, eventually, names for actions and for physical relationships of objects. This department still serves as the basis for all other language. It

is wholly physical in its referents, and even animals can learn such a language to a limited degree.

The second department of language must have been a distinctly later accomplishment. It is that which communicates such intagibles as a thought, an emotion or a spiritual object. Here the shared referent is not a sense-object to which one man can point physically nor a sensation which he can directly produce in the consciousness of the other. To communicate such realities as self, mind, idea, spirit, freedom -- or God -- men must continue to use the mediation of physical objects or acts in such a way as to designate indirectly and analogically objects of a fundamentally different character from their own. This is possible because there are relationships of order among the things in physical nature. These relationships suit them to serve as signs of thought:

> ... there is a Logos in the outward world, answering to the logos or internal reason of the parties . . . . there is a vast analogy in things, which prepares them, as forms, to be signs or figures of thoughts, and thus, bases or types of words. 1

The selection of an object to stand for an interior reality will not be a matter of reflecting upon the interior state and deliberative choice of the most

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1. Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 21.

suitable object to signify it. It will proceed instead "by the simple force of nature." The soul, struggling to express itself, "flies to whatever signs and instruments it can find in the visible world, calling them in to act as interpreters, naming them at the same time, to stand, ever after, as interpreters in sound, when they are themselves out of sight."[1] Many such signs will be bodily gestures which are as natural to an internal state as a blush.

Precisely because of this physical rootage of all language, language about intangible realities can never be precise in the way in which language about phenomenal nature is precise. For it uses a form in physical nature to signify interior states and ideas which do not actually have any such property as form. The similarity which they do exhibit to physical forms is analogical, is the work of the divine Logos which is discovered by the logos in the mind of man as an answering movement -- yet beyond this it remains mysterious and impenetrable. No physical form or object can perfectly call up in the mind of a man the internal state or thought which another wishes to signify to him, because a physical form always suggests more than one interior referent, and thus remains ambiguous. Furthermore, any physical form will suggest attributes which are not intended to

1. Ibid., p. 23.

apply to the interior reality -- and most notably that of form itself, which no interior reality possesses in actuality.

The use of language in theology. The language of ethics and theology belongs to the second department. Here the concern is to communicate about unseen realities experienced through internal sentiment. The proper use of language in these disciplines thus requires the employment of many formulations from different angles of approach. In this way the referent is defined by repeated inclusion while the misleading implications of form are cancelled by contradictory forms. The method of theology is thus one of paradox. The fact that the various figures employed in a theological statement are in part contradictory to one another is not a defect but a necessary and constructive feature.

The highly social character of Bushnell's thought is emphasized once again in his theory of language. Language originates, is given its specific content and form, and becomes fixed and standardized only in a social context. The main outlines of Bushnell's theory exhibit some striking similarities to the contemporary work of George Herbert Mead, although Bushnell did not explicitly relate the language process to the arising of

the individual self as Mead has done.[1] Yet Bushnell did have a concept of the development of the individual which amounts to the gradual attainment of selfhood. It was clear to him that there is no such thing as a man in isolation from the social context of a family, a nation and a people. So thoroughly social is his whole understanding of man that it is taken as a matter of course that language is the product of social intercourse rather than an individual creation.

Bushnell's Formulation of the Christian Experience of Salvation

Bushnell's theological method, centered in religious experience, fathered to a great degree the later liberal movement in theology. With it he shared much in both mood and doctrine. It is a mistake, however, to identify him with all of the characteristics of that movement. Indeed he had no love for liberalism as such:

> Christ is no liberal, never takes the ground or boasts the distinction of a liberal among his countrymen, because it is not a part of his infirmity, in discovering an error here, to fly to an excess there. His ground is charity, not liberality; and the two are as wide apart in their practical implications, as adhering to all truth and being loose in all . . . . Charity extends allowance to men; liberality, to falsities themselves . . . . How different the manner of Jesus in this respect from that unreverent, feeble laxity, that lets errors be as good as truths, and takes it for a sign of intellectual eminence, that one can be floated comfortably in the abysses of liberalism . . . Nothing throws him off the centre on which truth rests; no prejudice, no opposition, no attempt to right a mistake, or rectify a delusion, or reform a practice. 2

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1. George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, ed. Charles W.Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

2. Bushnell, Nature and the Supernatural, p. 312.

An examination of the position which emerged from Bushnell's attempt to formulate the Christian experience of salvation shows how thoroughly evangelical his theology was.

Changes in the Understanding of the Problem Of Sin

The seriousness with which Bushnell took the problem of sin in human affairs presents a sharp contrast to the typical viewpoint of later liberalism and to Unitarianism in his own time. At the same time, his understanding of the nature and extent of the problem contrasted with that of revivalism.

The extent of sin in human nature. For Bushnell the problem of sin is an organic one rather than fundamentally an individual and personal one and is rooted in original sin: "it is continually assumed by the scripture that we fall by race, or as a corporate whole . . ."[1] He recognizes that sin has ontological implications and that it is rooted in alienation from God, but he understands sin to be basically a moral problem. "The fact of sin," he states, is "moral evil broken loose in the race."[2]

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1. Bushnell, Sermons on Christ and His Salvation, p. 278.

2. Ibid., p. 274.

The moral sphere, however, is not a limited compartment of human life but the door to the supernatural world which is the abode of man's true selfhood. The ravages of moral evil have thus broken and warped human nature itself. Since the entrance of sin into the race with Adam's fall, the laws of created human nature no longer work effectively according to the intention of the Creator. The governing principle of the self's activity under original righteousness has been replaced not so much by a contrary law as by lawlessness.

The human spiritual frame as well as the physical still retains some of the self-healing propensities which can be noted in plant and animal natures. Without these Bushnell believes we would be irredeemably lost. Yet the inability of human nature to correct itself at the crucial points involved in its original fall into chaos makes it powerless to use these self-healing properties for either its preservation or its restoration.

<u>The source of sin in original sin.</u> Original sin propagates "vertically," from generation to generation, by what Bushnell calls a "physiological" transmission from Adam as the progenitor of the human race. The controversy

over heredity against environment had not yet crystalized, and this statement cannot be interpreted in that context. Its root is rather Bushnell's conviction of the organic involvement of the individual man with his social group. He shares the life of his group, be it the human race as a historical whole, a "race" or "stock" from which he is descended, a nation, New England, or his own particular family unit. To make that point was his main objective. He set it in opposition to the individualistic and particularistic view of sin in revivalism. Curiously, this insight into the social nature of man was partially lost again by the Social Gospel movement in the very attempt to affirm it -- to its disadvantage in coming to grips with the social ills which it attacked.

Bushnell clearly holds that physical factors are involved in the transmission of original sin, and that the process is not simply an institutional nor even broadly cultural one. Yet he broke with tradition in insisting that the latter modes of transmission play an important role in the propagation. In this lay one of his most significant revisions of the understanding of the problem of original sin. This he justified by maintaining that a genuinely organic conception of the process is the really crucial necessity for an

adequate doctrine of original sin:

> I am well aware that those who have advocated, in former times, the church dogma of original sin, as well as those who adhere to it now, speak only of a taint derived by natural or physical propagation, and do not include the taint derived afterward, under the law of family infection. It certainly can be no heresy to include the latter; and, since it is manifest that both fall within the same general category of organic connection, it is equally manifest that both ought to be included, and, in all systematic reasonings, must be. 1

Both modes are included in what Bushnell terms a "physiological" transmission. The term seems to mean for him that the propagation of original sin is genetic in the broadest sense of the term rather than exclusively in the biological sense. This is in keeping with his contention that nature and supernature, while distinguishable in character, together form a single system under God's governance. Both natural and spiritual aspects of man's being -- which is to say the whole man -- must be involved in the sin which infects man.

The effect of sin is an experienced reality in the life of the Christian, and has been so throughout history. Its persistence in this fashion can only be accounted for by holding a notion of original sin -- which is to say sin which is passed down "vertically" from generation to generation through deep organic connections. For experience also shows that, unlike

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 104.

the good, sin cannot have remained so powerful throughout history through a "horizontal" propagation based upon the impact of character upon character:

> The bad impregnate human feeling through falsities, and lies, and oppressions, and combinations of interest, or at best through the dazzling exploits of ambition. But there is a short run to such kind of power. Deep in evil, the world is yet naturally shy of evil, and begins very soon to get away from it. No bad character propagates long, as by character. Even bad writings drop out soon and die, as it were, of their own poison. 1

The experienced staying power of sin, then, is by virtue of the solidarity of every man with the race, which fell as a whole when Adam was its sole locus and representative. From this organic root it continues to break out afresh in every individual and every age, infecting all human acts and relations in history.

The inevitability of sin. Bushnell argued that a man is only responsible for the evil which he himself commits. On that basis he returned to a more ancient view than that of revivalism: It is not guilt that is inherited with original sin but rather a privation of that which is necessary for the rejection of evil. In line with his theory of the will, Bushnell held that an experiment of evil is necessary to knowledge of the good because of this privation.

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1. Bushnell, Sermons on Christ and His Salvation, p. 279.

In the infancy of the individual, there is a three-fold lack of what he would need in order to avoid a personal fall into sin like that of Adam.[1] Originally he lacks knowledge of the good which is his proper end in life, since this cannot be known without experience. Furthermore, he lacks the training by which habits disposing him toward the good are incorporated into his character. Bushnell laid great stress upon the establishing of habits in his methods for Christian nurture. Finally, he lacks the social relationships which are necessary for his participation in the kingdom of God.

All of these lacks might simply result in temporarily incomplete personhood. As his will developed naturally he would become a responsible moral agent as his radical childhood participation in the will of his parents gradually diminished. Man's nature must be seen in the context of Adam's fall and its impact upon succeeding generations by the laws of physical and psychological consequence, however. The very participation of the child in the parental will makes it impossible that any individual starting with these privations could actually become a soul without a fall of his own.

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1. This point is made in the best study of Bushnell's theology to date, to the writer's knowledge: Rachel Henderlite, "The Theological Basis of Horace Bushnell's Christian Nurture" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of Religion, Yale University, 1947), p. 145.

The guidance which could prevent it is itself always warped by the sin of previous parents and of society. Yet without any guidance in the good he would be placed in an even worse situation than that of imperfect and sinful guidance. Sinful parents at least wish the good for him and try to warn him of wrong and to encourage good habits. In fact it seems to Bushnell that Adam himself must inevitably have fallen, set as he was alone in the world -- without the infection of prior sin yet also without parents and tradition to guide him. The experiment of evil would have been necessary for even Adam to come to know the good.[1]

A New Theory of the Will

The will as a self-determining power of the soul.

Bushnell stood at the end of a long series of modifications which had been worked upon the theology of Jonathan Edwards under the illusion of refining and perpetuating that theology. No more drastic change had occurred in this process than that which took place in theories of the will and of its role in sin and salvation.

Edwards had explained his bold glorification of the sovereignty of God through the use of an original

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1. Bushnell, Nature and the Supernatural, p. 179.

psychological analysis of the will. He portrayed this faculty in the natural man as necessarily responsive to the passion of self-interest. To this the will was entirely bound until the supernatural grace of God presented the only affection capable of overriding that interest -- the love of Being in general for its own sake without any basis of interest. The will thus has no genuine self-determining power in Edwards' theory. This theory of the will was too strong meat even for his avowed disciples. Hopkins eventually had asserted the coexistence of divine and human agency in conversion. He held that guilt attached only to the free acts of moral agents. But Adam's sin was such an act, and thus original sin involved the individual in guilt through the headship of Adam. Dwight had ventured the positive assertion that the will has a real natural freedom. Taylor finally asserted in unqualified fashion that the will is a self-determining power of the mind.

It no longer occurred to Bushnell that freedom and self-determination in the will could be questioned. He turned to attack the habit of regarding the will in mechanistic terms which characterized the chain of theories which had admitted those points by such slow degrees. He had the views of his contemporaries in mind

first and foremost in this attack, but one cannot mistake his implication of Edwards' own treatment of the will:

> Discussing the human will, for example, or the great question of liberty, the writer will be overpowered by the terms and predicates of language; which being mostly derived from the physical world, are charged, to the same extent, with a mechanical significance. And then we shall have a sophism, great or small, according to his capacity -- a ponderous volume, it may be, of formulas, filled up, rolled about, inverted, crossed and twisted -- a grand, stupendous, convuluted sophism -- all a mere outward practice, however, on words and propositions, in which, as they contain a form of cause and effect in their own nature, it is easily made out that human liberty is the liberty of a scale-beam, turned by the heavier weights. Meantime, the question is only a question of consciousness, one in which the simple decision of consciousness is final; -- to which, argument, whether good or bad, can really add nothing, from which nothing take. 1

It is apparent from the above remarks that Bushnell regarded a false theological method arising from the misunderstanding of the problem of language to be the fundamental mistake of able thinkers in this area. That basic error, he contended, vitiated the very attempt to do justice to the freedom and self-determination of the will in a theology like that of his teacher, N. W. Taylor.

Rachel Henderlite points out that, while Bushnell shared in general the faculty psychology of his contemporaries, he did not treat the will as simply a

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1. Bushnell, God in Christ, pp. 62 f.

faculty as they did, and thereby avoided some of the notable pitfalls of such a view.[1] He thinks of the will as the center of the self-government of the total activity of the self rather than of the mind alone. By the will's regulation that activity is given its integrity, the self maintaining its own unity by means of the will's harmonization of all of the self's highly complex operations.

The effect of sin upon the self through the will. The effect of sin is nothing less than the dissolution of the self. For the rebellion of the will against its proper guiding principle -- the principle of right apprehended by the conscience -- can only issue in this delicate balancing operation of the will being thrown into malfunction. Through the rebellious activity of the will the total activity of the self becomes disrupted and misproportioned. Its unity is thus in the process of being destroyed by its own internal actions and reactions, in conjunction with the firm structure of natural and supernatural laws which impinge upon it from within and from without the self.

The will is the key-note of man's distinctive humanity. The theory of the will is the heart of Bushnell's distinction between the physical and the moral-spiritual spheres. At the same time the will is the point

1. Henderlite, "Christian Nurture", p. 141

in the cosmos where the two spheres are reconciled into a single system. The distinction is essentially Kantian. Nature is that which is determined in all of its operations according to laws of cause and effect. Supernature is that peculiarly human realm which, although it operates within its own definite framework of laws, is essentially characterized by freedom. In the being of man the two poles are united, for man is both body and soul in inseparable union and interaction so long as earthly life persists. By the will, with its freedom, the self keeps its own involuntary and physical operations in harmonious unity with its true supernatural nature and destiny.

Only by its freedom from the causal determination which characterizes the order of physical nature is the will able to exercise a control over the physical operations of the self and to harmonize them with its spiritual well being. The will's freedom is provided by its capability of answering to the ordering principles or laws of the supernatural realm. This eternal structure of moral rectitude and truth God reveals to the conscience. So long as it takes these laws for the standard of its governing operations, the will is free to correct those operations of the self which threaten to break the harmony of the self's physical or spiritual welfare. Such corrective activity proceeds efficiently from the center of this harmonious balance.

Once the will's freedom is used rebelliously, however, it has broken from the source of its freedom of control. It is still free and self-determining, but it has suffered a crucial loss in its freedom to do good. The balance has been disrupted beyond the power of the will to restore it. There is no longer a stable center in the self from which the will may operate. The will's restorative efforts are therefore fatally misproportioned by its own eccentricity. The action of natural and supernatural law which formerly could be utilized correctively now becomes an overcorrection which adds to the conflict within the self:

> The soul, in its normal state, including the will or supernatural power, together with the involuntary powers subordinated to it by their laws, is an instrument tuned by the key-note of the conscience, viz. right, to sound harmoniously with it; or it is a fluid, we may say, whose form, or law of crystalization is the conscience. And then it follows that, if the will breaks into revolt, the instrument is mistuned in every string, the fluid shaken becomes a shapeless, opaque mass, without unity or crystalline order. . . . a revolted will is to the soul, or in it, . . . what a grain of sand is in the eye -- the soul has become a weeping organ, not an organ simply of sight . . . . the perceptions discolored, the judgements unable to hold their scales steadily because of the fierce gusts of passion, the thoughts huddling by in crowds of wild suggestion, the imagination haunted by ugly and disgustful shapes, the appetites contesting with reason, the senses victorious over faith, anger blowing the overheated fires of malice, low jealousies sulking in dark angles of the soul, and envies baser still, hiding under the skim of its green-mantled pools -- all the powers that should be strung in harmony, loosened from each other, and brewing in hopeless and helpless confusion; the conscience meantime thundering wrathfully above and shooting down hot bolts of judgement, and the pallid fears hurrying wildly about with their brimstone torches -- these are the motions of sins, the Tartarean landscape of the soul and its disorders, when self-government is gone and the constituent integrity is dissolved. We cannot call it the natural state of man, nature disowns it. . . .
>
> Not that any law of the soul's nature is discontinued, or that any capacity which makes one a proper man is taken away by the bad inheritance, as appears to be the view of some theologians; every function of thought and feeling remains, every mental law continues to run; the disorder is

> that of functions abused and laws of operation provoked to a penal and retributive action, by the misdoings of an evil will. Though it is become, in this manner, a weeping organ, as we just now intimated, still it is an organ of sight; only it sees through tears. And the profound reality of the disorder appears in the fact that the will by which it was wrought can not, unassisted, repair it.[1]

The organic unity of the wills of members of a family. Bushnell's essentially practical view of man anticipated depth-psychology's recognition of the operation of the mind in hidden ways on a deeper level than the conscious and voluntary, as Miss Henderlite points out.[2] This sub-structure Bushnell regarded as the "natural" part of the soul. It is the part most akin to the body and is essentially passive, reacting to external influences from either the will or the world outside the self. It is comprised of the sensibilities, desires, passions, memory, and associations. It is largely through this natural part of the soul rather than through a child's own acts of will that formative experience enters his selfhood during the crucial early years. The habits so formed incline his character toward good or evil.

The parents of a very young child actually exercise for him most of the guidance which his own will eventually will take over as it develops self-regulative capacity. His own will is plastic and dependent, so far as it can be termed a will at all as yet. The participation of his will in the will of his parents as they provide for his immediate needs furnishes him with the experience which brings his own will into existence and forms it. The process of gaining independence of will is a long and continuous one. It begins at birth and gradually accelerates as the will gains strength and maturity. Yet

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1. Bushnell, Nature and the Supernatural, pp. 172 f.

2. Henderlite, "Christian Nurture", p. 141.

an individual will is never wholly independent of the wills of others to the day of death.

The general will. It is in this organic unity of the will of the child with that of the parent that Bushnell sees the existence of a general will. Through this network of organic family relationship the wills of all humanity are ultimately bound together into what constitutes, for certain purposes, one common will of man. This general will is limited, of course, for each individual will as it emerges into maturity has its own character and personal autonomy. While not to be taken as real in the same sense as individual wills, the general will has sufficient reality to indicate that the corruption of the first pair of human wills will be the corruption of all others. Likewise, the complete redemption of any will is inconceivable apart from the salvation of the whole race of men.

Similarly, we have to contend with a kind of general will for every more particular human community. There is a national will, an Anglo-Saxon will and a family will -- each with varying degrees of distinctive existence and power over individuals in these respective societies:

> . . . in all organic bodies known to us -- states, churches, sects, armies -- there is a common spirit, by which they are pervaded and distinguished from each other. And we use this word spirit, in such cases, to denote a power interfused, a comprehensive will actuating the members, regarding also the common body itself, as a larger and more inclusive individual.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Passing then to families, you are not surprised to discover the same thing.[1]

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 104 f.

Sin enters into the created world through the revolt of the will of Adam, and subsequently of each man. It makes an impact upon physical nature through the will's ability to alter forms and to bring about new ones in physical nature both within and without the self. Nature itself thus is partially fallen into a state of "un-nature." The moral perversion of the ends of man's action results in the production of physical objects which are ugly, unfitting and destructive.[1]

Self-determination after sin. Under the theory of the will set forth above, it is clear that the rebellious will remains free and self-determining in an important sense. The will's continued self-determination now progressively deepens the self-destructive effects of its original revolt. At the same time it means that man's spiritual nature has not been anihilated but remains as an avenue which makes his restoration possible. Yet the utter incapacity of the will to reverse or even arrest the disintegration begun with its revolt closes to it the possibility of continued health and growth through its own determination. It makes this hope completely dependent upon aid from outside any human will for its realization. For all human wills are similarly incapacitated. Without super-human aid there can be no true progress in the development of any individual human life or of any society, but only inexorable decline:

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1. Bushnell, Nature and the Supernatural, pp. 185 ff.

> We love to look on education, political liberty, personal culture, and the sway of moral ideas, all as advancing under fixed laws of progress. This doctrine of progress is even a better kind of gospel to many, and more rational. And yet if we speak of a strictly natural progress, under natural laws, there is no fiction more utterly baseless: for after the fact of sin . . . the progress of society must be inevitably downward from bad to worse. Just what ought to be true is true, many of the proudest, most historic races drop into extinction; and many others exist that we call savage races, just because they make no such progress, more than the animals, from age to age.[1]

Such is the human predicament under sin, and the need for a salvation which man's will as a self-determining power is powerless to work for him.

Reinterpretation of the Role of Christ in Salvation

The two conditions for an effective salvation. Under Bushnell's conception of the will and of the problem posed by sin, an effective strategy of salvation must meet two conditions. The crucial empowering help must be tendered from outside the self. No less a power than God himself has the requisite freedom and capacity to initiate the process. Yet the second condition appears at first to be contradictory to this indispensible externality of the source of saving power: if the will's freedom is not to be abolished, the saving help must come from within humanity itself. Any simply exterior manipulation of the will of a self, even by God's will, would not be a salvation of that self at all. It would be an eradication of it instead. The self's freedom to determine itself by

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1. Bushnell, Sermons on Christ and His Salvation, pp. 274 f.

its own will is the very core of man's distinctive humanity, and freedom is of the essence of the spiritual realm to which true human nature belongs. Such an action on God's part would have to rescind that freedom. Short of that, it would fail to accomplish anything more than the further bifurcation of the self under the increased "thundering" of the conscience against the rebel will in the divided soul.

Bushnell set forth this problem and formulated his answer to it in a sermon on I. Corinthians 15:21. He startlingly but appropriately entitled it "Salvation by Man." His central point seems to be much the same one set forth by Paul Tillich in his comparison of "autonomy," "heteronomy," and "theonomy."[1] The autonomous operation of the self or of society becomes progressively bankrupt of the power upon which its being depends. The difficulty with a heteronomous salvation imposed by an alien will is not simply its affront to man's pride in his self-sufficiency. A more fundamental difficulty is that it cannot be internalized adequately no matter how desperately men may wish to lose themselves in it. Thus a truly theonomous power must include implicitly the autonomous principle which makes it genuinely our own, while depending fundamentally upon openness to the power beyond us:

> . . . we not only want a supernatural salvation (for nothing less than that can possibly regenerate the fall of nature) but in order to have any steady faith in it, we must have it

1. Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 44 ff.

> wrought into nature and made to be as it were, one of its own stock powers. It does not meet our intellectual conditions, till it satisfies, in a degree, the scientific instinct in us, and becomes rational and solid, by appearing to work inherantly, or from within, as by a certain force of law. Moving on the soul and society, as from a point above and without, it would be here, and there, and nowhere, flitting as it were apparitionally, breaking out now as from behind the moon, and vanishing next, as our faith reels away, in we know not what spaces of the air, or abysses of the sea.[1]

The terms Bushnell used here to describe a salvation which fails to fulfill both of the two requirements are almost identical to those he used elsewhere to describe the deficiencies of revivalism's concept of the process of salvation:

> . . . the very act or ictus by which the change is wrought is isolated or individualized, so as to stand in no connection with God's other means or causes. . . . Religion is thus . . . a miraculous epidemic, a fire-ball shot from the moon, something holy, because it is from God, but so extraordinary, so out of place, that it cannot suffer any vital connection with the ties, and causes, and forms, and habits, which constitute the frame of our history. Hence the desultory, hard, violent, and often extravagant or erratic character it manifests. Hence, in part, the dreary years of decay and darkness, that interspace our months of excitement and victory.[2]

This insistance upon stability stemmed from his own religious experience of the instability of his youthful revivalistic conversion experience. This contrasted with the later stability which rested upon deep connections with his earlier home life and habits.

The fulfillment of the two conditions by the Incarnation. The salvation which God has wrought in Jesus Christ fulfills, through the Incarnation, the two conditions discussed

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1. Bushnell, Sermons on Christ and His Salvation, p. 274.

2. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 188.

above. It also meets the further necessity that the process of salvation ultimately include the redemption of the human race as a corporate whole if the redemption of the individual is to be complete:

> . . . Christ is in no sense to be thought of as a being external, or dispensing salvation from above, but as a second Adam in the race itself, a regenerative power, so inserted into humanity as to be, in a sense, of it. Just as the apostle's language intimates -- "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." For this word "since" is a word of rational connection, supposing an impression felt of some inherant fitness, requiring the corporate disadvantage of the fall, to be made good by a corporate remedy.[1]

Since Adam was the progenitor of the race, it is readily understood how he became its head. But Christ enters human history in the midst of it, just as each of us:

> How then, being no progenitor, does he become any proper Adam at all? how get himself into the race, in any such general way, as to become a new headship of life?
> . . . we must not press the correspondence too closely; it is not understood to be literal, or to hold in any but a general and qualified way. Let it be enough that as the sin abounded, so the grace much more abounds, only not in exactly the same manner. Adam is our head physiologically, Christ is our head by the head-influences he inaugurates, by the authority, sympathy, beauty, of his suffering goodness -- a power that propagates across all the lines of generation, as efficiently as if it traveled by descent -- a new regenerative power incarnated into the race as such, there to work, running down through all descent, as a redemption of man executed in the large view by man.[2]

In contrast to evil, good characteristically expands its hold over human life with the passage of time by this collateral propagation. It would soon triumph were it not for the con-

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1. Bushnell, Sermons on Christ and His Salvation, p. 272.

2. Ibid., pp. 278 f.

tinual outbreak of sin from the organic springs of original sin. If this is true of good in general, how much more so of the influence of Christ upon the race. The goodness thus incarnated in humanity is not merely that of a superlatively moral man, but is the very suffering goodness of God himself.

For the theory which accounts Jesus as primarily a supreme human moral example -- so characteristic of the ethics of many a liberal preacher who followed in Bushnell's wake -- he has no use whatsoever. Jesus indeed offers such an example. That passes into relative insignificance, however, beside the organic means through which the superhuman character of Jesus makes its impact upon the characters of men. What is required to break the bondage of the will to the penal disorders of "un-nature" is not merely the external presentation of a form illustrating righteousness. It is an in-forming or in-spiration which, being organically internalized, has the power to transform the will from within its own freedom through the gift of a new imagination.

This was the insight which came to Bushnell in the experience of 1848, and which he set forth in <u>God in Christ.</u> Christ becomes for the soul in process of being saved what Bushnell described as a new will "in-charactered" in the soul. In accepting Christ the Christian recognizes him as the form of the soul. This form is not heteronomous because its suffering goodness is perfectly directed toward man's own true ends, and because it does not negate man's own will but works from

within the will's own point of origin. Thus internalized, the formative power of this new indwelling spirit or will of Christ creates a new life of righteousness in the individual soul and in the corporate body of humanity.

Progress under the power of grace. The power of Christ at work in individual and corporate life is truly efficacious. The transformation it effects is real and is manifested in external history, even through it is grasped by faith rather than by law. Thus Bushnell held a Christocentric doctrine of progress which he felt correctly formulated the experienced reality often misinterpreted as an automatic natural progress:

> And yet we want a salvation that is to us all which this doctrine of [natural] progress pretends to be, and God defers to our want, by contriving a gospel for man that is to be, in form, by man; giving us to see the general humanity so penetrated and charged with the supernatural, by Christ living in it, as to be, in a sense, working out redemption naturally from within itself. We call it the progress of society, and such it really is, and yet, solid and scientific as we think it, all the reality it has comes of the incorporated, incarnated grace, in Jesus Christ, which is countervaling always the penal disorders of nature, and setting continually on, as by a destiny itself, the rising fortunes of the race. Our gospel is a cause, in this manner, among causes; a real calculable force, the confidence of which can be held with a steady assurance.[1]

Certainly some of the assurance of progress came to Bushnell from the general vision of a new beginning and an open future which pervaded the very atmosphere about the pioneers of the romantic movement the world over during the early years

1. Ibid., p. 275.

of the nineteenth century. The reality of progress seemed obvious to any sensitive soul. One cannot miss this general optimism and confidence in his early writings. It is prominent in his first published sermon, on the Crisis of the Church, and in his Phi Beta Kappa address at Yale, later published as The True Wealth or Weal of Nations. The note remains in his later works. Yet the tone has been deepened and mellowed somewhat by his own experience and his theological struggles. The end product was an attempt to formulate out of that experience of progress a position which would mediate between the two strong, antithetical movements in the church of his day: Unitarianism and revivalistic orthodoxy. It is in the light of this purpose that we can best understand his equal insistence upon the reality of human progress and its impossibility apart from a Christological grounding.

The assurance of progress which Bushnell shared with the Unitarians he felt to be experientially justified. He felt that it effectively challenged the necessity of the unstable and vascillating religious life encouraged by revivalism. That instability in the visible process of salvation, coupled with revivalism's strict doctrine of divine sovereignty, made God himself seem unstable and capricious. God's sovereignty was interpreted in such a way as to make His will the immediate cause of all that happened, with but a single mode of operation. This was precisely the opposite religious import from that of Calvin's doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty.

Stemming from the Reformation principle of justification by faith alone and addressed to the faithful, it had expressed well the sublime conviction of God's perfect fidelity and dependability.

Against the increasingly humanistic tendencies of Unitarianism, on the other hand, Bushnell felt that there was experiential verification for his claim that the grace in Jesus Christ is the sole root and source of the reality of this tangible progress. If a Unitarian avoided the pantheism of the transcendentalists he would still have difficulty retaining any genuine gospel in the absence of a doctrine of the divinity of Christ's person and work. In view of this lack this gospel had to remain one centered in man, asserting the power of self-salvation as a natural human attribute. Such a self-saving power Bushnell felt his analysis of internal experience to show a vain hope. A man-centered gospel must, in fact, be quite as unstable a basis for religious life as was the revivalistic gospel of sheer transcendence. As the latter was rooted in a capricious God, so the former was rooted in man, who is in truth capricious -- tossed in the tempest of his own internal passions and reactions because of his revolt against his own true nature.

Reinterpretation of the Nature of God's Activity and the Relation of Christ to the Godhead

Predestination and the continuity of the process of salvation. Bushnell was convinced that stability in the process of salvation must be based upon an understanding of

God's nature which emphasizes His dependable stability. Since Bushnell understood theology as the formulation of what is given in religious experience, he could hardly have retained even a modified version of orthodoxy's doctrine of predestination while recognizing the validity of revivals to even the limited extent he did. The inherent instability of the revival experience would have to be imputed to God. Long since, predestination had been moved unwittingly from eternity into time. There it had constituted a problem of theodicy which kept Emmons' considerable dialectical acumen fully employed. Bushnell was interested in upholding orthodoxy, but felt no interest in doctrines inconsistent with what seemed to him to be the plain content of religious experience.

His rejection of formal allegiance to any kind of predestination resulted in an automatic charge of Pelagianism by spokesmen of both old and new revivalism. Unitarians tended gleefully to accept this judgment as correct, welcoming Bushnell's views as a support of their own cause from the side of orthodoxy itself. On the other hand they found Bushnell's Christocentric formulation of supernaturalism as distasteful as his orthodox critics found his naturalism.

A Christocentric trinity based upon a Christocentric Soteriology. The charge of Pelagianism was a mistaken one. The respect in which the substance of Bushnell's theology in fact leaned farthest from historic orthodoxy was his patri-

passionism. This depended upon a monarchian conception of the Trinity. God must suffer because the suffering of Christ was the keynote of His impact upon the characters of men, and God is one with Christ. Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is indeed truly man -- incorporated into the race so as to become one of us. But it is precisely this humanity of Jesus Christ which is the most difficult for us to apprehend and the least crucial. The primary necessity is a genuinely supernatural salvation. Christ's divinity is for that reason his most salient feature.[1] A highly Christocentric theology was hardly the hallmark of much of the later liberal movement. Yet it was in this direction that this father of American theological liberalism leaned. The centrality of the suffering Christ was still plainly visible in Gladden's soteriology despite its further naturalization.

Bushnell's conception of the relation of the person and work of Christ admitted passibility to the Godhead. It provides the key to the inclusion in God's nature of both internal consistency in righteousness and consistency in relatedness to men in time and history. God's unchanging righteousness is mediated to men through a constant strategy of love relating Him to their changing predicament in saving activity.

Bushnell held a "trinity of expression" similar in its broad characteristics to Schleiermacher's interpretation.

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1. Bushnell, "The Character of Jesus Forbidding His Classification Among Men" in Nature and the Supernatural, chap. x.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three expressions, to men in time, of the Godhead. Each is truly the one God as He is encountered relationally by men. These three self-expressions of God in history are comparable to the forms in the physical world which are called up in human communication to mediate a supernatural reality. The three persons of the Trinity similarly mediate God to men, as He expresses himself in and through them.

This interpretation of the Trinity stopped short of Sabellianism at one point: Bushnell refused to press the question into the internal nature of the Godhead itself. He treated that area of his cosmos remarkably like Kant treated the ding-an-sich. In this he displayed a theological trait typical of the liberal movement: that of pressing a theory consistently up to the point where its implications become uncomfortable, and then refusing in the name of the limitations of the human mind to press any farther.

The expression of God in Christ is central to the other two. Bushnell held that God is Father not "in virtue of his creation and government of the world" as held by the Sabellian theory, but is so named as incidental to the central fact and mystery of the Incarnation.[1] The affirmation of the metaphysical unity behind the expressions constituted the creative doctrinal contribution of Unitarianism in Bushnell's estimate. This unity was such that God himself can properly be said to have

1. Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 175.

suffered in Christ's suffering on the cross.

Bushnell imported this relationality into the divine nature by a reinterpretation of the concept of omnipresence. This concept illustrated his openness to the growing sense of the universe as a manifestation of the immanent God, but he cautiously attempted to avoid pantheism.[1] He defined "presence" in terms of "act and sway." God is "in-resident in his works," being present wherever His activity is felt.[2] Thus God is present in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, in whom God is now at work everywhere within the soul of the race effecting our salvation. The words "spirit" and "presence" being often used interchangeably in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is thus His activity among us.[3]

Stability and change in God's saving activity. Although He is present in different ways in relation to varying human acts and situations, God is always present everywhere because He is always acting. The sense of God's religious dependability is heightened for Bushnell rather than diminished by the realization of the richness of the modes of operation of the divine agency. This relational activity is directed by God's perfectly constant will. ". . . while God is unchangeable, he is yet infinitely various; unchangeable in

1. Munger, Bushnell, p. 127.

2. Bushnell, "Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion" in Building Eras in Religion, p. 155.

3. Ibid.

his purposes, various in his means."[1]

The necessity of both freedom and law in the human will and of unity and diversity in the activity of the human self serves Bushnell as an analogy for ~~the~~ understanding God's nature. Freely responsive variability of act and absolutely dependable constancy of purpose are two sides of the same coin in the divine nature.

The unification of self-activity imparted to the self by the human will derives from the will's direction of that activity in accordance with the soul's proper ends. These are given to the conscience in its apprehension of righteousness. "The conscience is our sense of the authority of right, or our consciousness of receiving or rejecting this great internal law."[2] The source of the unity of the self is thus the law of right itself. Right is indefinable, because it is fundamental and simple, but it is an absolute and unchangeable principle. As the root of the word indicates, it is symbolized by undeviating straightness.

This same principle of right constitutes God's unchanging character as well as being the source of the unity of the human soul:

> By this ideal law we should be bound, even if we existed apart from all relations, just as God was bound before all his acts of creation; therefore we call it the law absolute.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 160.

2. Bushnell, "The Growth of Law" [Yale Alumni Address, 1843] in Work and Play (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), pp. 85 f.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

Bushnell's words here seem to carry the suggestion that the principle of right is a superior principle external to God's own nature, to which He is bound. A wider reading of his thought suggests, however, that he did not regard this law as external to the divine nature. The dangerous looseness of his language on this point was encouraged by his attempt to avoid any judgment about the internal nature of the Godhead. The law absolute is the content of the divine will, for Bushnell, and that is enough to know.

Through its perfect freedom of loving action yet utter constancy in the absolute law of right, the divine will unites unchangeability and variability in the Godhead. Right and love are coterminous within the divine Being:

> . . . we have another law exactly twin to this [absolute law of right] in terms of relational existence; it is love. This latter belongs more especially to religion, which is itself relational, as respects God, since God undertakes -- that is the whole aim of his government -- to be the defender of right. But the two are so far measures each of the other, that whoever is fixed and centralized in one, will be in the other, as God Himself is.[1]

God's love, thus, is his activity toward his creation, and is relational. God's absolute and unwavering righteousness is always the controlling purpose according to which his will directs this activity. His activity must vary if it is to be constantly right in various situations.

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1. Ibid.

The relativity of the unchanging law of right. This variability holds true of God's activity even though the activity be that of revealing the divine law for man. Revealed law falls into two classes, each of which is subject to change to some degree. Laws such as the Decalogue and the Golden Rule are given for their inherent beneficence. These are casuistically refined and perfected in time, although never overturned. Permissive statutes are those given for certain conditions liable to change. They may be more drastically revised, reformed, or even completely superseded without prejudice to their original rightness nor to the unchangeability of right itself:

> . . . the moral import of actions, physically the same, is . . . ever changing . . . It is conceivable that even a positive statute of revelation may lose its applicability by reason of a radical change in the circumstances it was designed to cover. Nor can it properly be said that such a statute is repealed -- it is only waiting for the circumstances in which its virtue lay. A new rule contradictory to it in words, may yet be wholly consistent with it, and bring no reflection on its merits.[1]

That Bushnell applied this principle to the area of doctrinal formulation under his theory of language has already been made clear. Bushnell was willing to stress the neglected pole of a paradoxical truth. God's adaptability to the variant acts and responses of men in time and history had been neglected, in Bushnell's opinion, in orthodoxy's overstressing of the other pole of absolute divine sovereignty. In this theological

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1. Ibid., p. 100.

trait he was like Lyman Beecher, whose emphasis varied as he went from place to place giving it all he had in either direction according to the character of his congregation. Bushnell had developed a more carefully reasoned and consistent theological method which justified and controlled his technique. Either emphasis, taken alone without its correction by the countervaling emphasis, was less than half true by Bushnell's reckoning: it was dangerously misleading.

Finney solved the problem in a different direction. He had sensed the difficulty raised by the assertion of human inability within a revivalistic view of the process of salvation. He discarded the obnoxious doctrine quite as readily as did Bushnell. Instead he asserted that God is always ready to accept the sinner who will but lower the barrier of his stubborn will and accept forgiveness. Finney had actually swung farther toward the Pelagian fringe than had Bushnell, since Finney taught that man in effect voluntarily blocks his own salvation and is perfectly capable of voluntarily ceasing to do so. Yet Bushnell's innovations were attacked as Pelagian by Finney himself as heatedly as by Tyler. Bushnell had dared to urge a fundamental revision in the understanding of the process of salvation. Finney had retained the chief external characteristics of the process, merely augmenting further man's contribution to it at the expense of God's. That Bushnell's changes were regarded as more dangerous to Christian faith and life than Finney's is an indication that the orthodoxy of the day in New England was perhaps in need of a Bushnell instead of just a Finney.

CHAPTER V

WASHINGTON GLADDEN AND INCIPIENT SOCIAL GOSPEL LIBERALISM

The Process of Salvation as Social Progress

The Religious Climate of the "Gilded Age"

The year 1860 is one of the dividing lines of the nineteenth century. 1857 and '58 saw the last great revival wave in the North, with Finney's return East from Oberlin, Knapp in Boston again and Henry Ward Beecher now holding forth in Brooklyn. This had been preceded by twenty years of drought for the revivalists. It had begun when the panic of 1837 resulted in lean times for merchants like the Tappan brothers in New York, who had supported the work of Finney and his fellow revivalists. After that time an increasing interest in economic reform tended to supplant that in moral reform. A further slump in religious experiences accompanied the Mexican War in the late 1840's. Then, after one brief reprieve, the age of the great mass revivals in the North was over.

1859, the year of the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species, saw Bushnell's retirement from his pastorate because of ill health. His influence continued to grow through his occasional addresses and especially through his writings. After the Civil War most of American Christianity became frankly acclimated to the cultural spirit of optimistic America and to the so-called "gilded age". The first fruits of America's

industrial revolution resulted in great wealth for a few and great poverty and misery for many. Earlier in the century a general optimism and a sense of American destiny, based upon an intuition of the vast potential of the new continent, had been shared by Bushnell and the revivalists alike. Now Edward Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks, Washington Gladden and others took up and amplified this note into a confident rationalism with even stronger overtones of American nationalism, and made it one of the main themes of a new theological movement.

The 1880's saw the emergence of this movement as a distinct school of theology, known in New Haven as "the New Theology," and at Andover as "Progressive Orthodoxy." The acknowledged father of this theology was Horace Bushnell. The prophet of the school was Theodore Thornton Munger. Other prime leaders included Newman Smyth, Elisha Mulford and Washington Gladden. The latter is also renowned for his pioneering of the later Social Gospel movement on the basis of this theological orientation. This theological school became the "modernism" of the early twentieth century.[1]

The Evolution of Christian Nurture Toward Natural Progress

Gladden's debt to Bushnell. Because Gladden typifies this stream of theology while being directly related to the concerns of the Social Gospel, we shall give particular atten-

1. Charles Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 18.

tion to his conception of the process of salvation. No more explicit disciple of Bushnell could be found than Gladden. His own writings about the process of salvation employ almost the identical terminology which Bushnell used to describe the process. The principal weight of the sections of his works dealing with the topic is often carried by extensive quotations from Bushnell.[1] When Gladden was called to the pastorate of one of his early churches, at North Adams, Massachusetts, Bushnell preached his induction sermon and stayed at Gladden's home for a week.[2]

In Gladden's essentially practical mind, however, the real import of Christian nurture underwent a further evolution in the direction of optimism and inevitable progress despite the identity of his phrases with Bushnell's formulation. These subtle but important changes reflected the progressive deterioration of romanticism into sentimentality and the further institutionalization of Bushnell's apprehension of grace and religious confidence into a doctrine of inevitable progress. Gladden's practicality was based on Bushnell himself. It opened the back door to a disguised individualism while holding the front door tightly barred against that spectre. The result might aptly be described by the converse of one of Bushnell's own principles: a new rule wholly consistent with his own in words was, in some

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1. A typical example of this is Washington Gladden, The Christian Pastor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), chap. xvii. This book was written as a textbook for seminary students, also readable by the intelligent layman.

2. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 28.

respects, contradictory to his original vision. Since Bushnell's vision of the process of salvation has been set forth in detail, it will not be necessary to repeat the description of it as it formed the basis of Gladden's thought on the subject. We shall direct our attention only to the changes which Gladden unconsciously introduced into its content.

Sources of Gladden's changes in the conception of the process. These changes had two related sources. On the one hand, they stemmed in large measure from the influence of pioneering social theorists upon Gladden. He was influenced somewhat by such leaders of British social Christianity as Frederick Denison Maurice and, especially, Frederick W. Robertson.[1] The influence of John Ruskin upon him was much more pronounced by his own admission, and is well documented by Charles Hopkins.[2] His debt to Herbert Spencer must also be noted. Spencer's version of social Darwinism included a belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics. This mated it easily with Bushnell's conception of the process of social evolution. Spencer also regarded the action of natural law as kindly and beneficent -- in contrast to the estimate held by Huxley in his 1893 Romanes lecture on Evolution and Ethics.

The inordinate flexibility of Bushnellism as owing to Bushnell. Bushnell's own viewpoint clearly provided everything that was needed for the admission of such influences as

1. Ibid., p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

Gladden received from the men mentioned above. Bushnell had affirmed on principle that his own formulations were bound to be altered by the evolution of conditions. He had expressed a sublime confidence that the working of time would produce greater truth. Darwin did not invent the notion of evolution itself, and such a concept was built into Bushnell's methodology as well as his thought -- which was an important reason why it prospered after the impact of Darwinian thought instead of being overthrown.

Bushnell furthermore had reconciled supernature as known through religion, with nature as known through science. As nature itself came to be understood as evolving the science through which it is known was likewise recognized to be an evolving thing. Bushnell had already affirmed that religious knowledge and religion itself, being relational, should evolve with changing circumstances. The law absolute to which they were related remained an unchanging and centralizing anchor. But it was no real step at all for Bushnell's successors to assume the evolution of supernatural reality itself.

Above all, Bushnell's derivation of theological doctrine from that which is given in experience made it inevitable that the evolutionary interpretation of experience would find its way into the New Theology along with the experience being examined. Almost anything else that might occur to a

Bushnellian could find its way in by the same path. Interpretation forms an integral part of the content of any experience and Bushnell lacked an adequate specification of other important theological criteria than experience itself.

According to Lyman Abbott, "the object of Christianity is human welfare; its method is character building; its process is evolution; and the secret of its power is God." To him, redemption was not a matter of restoring man to original innocence, but of spiritual evolution from a lower nature through which process God is creating a brand new humanity in Christ.[1] Said Elisha Mulford, "the process and end of the life of the spirit is the development of a perfect humanity, the aim is the attainment and fulfillment of a perfect manhood."[2] To these sentiments Gladden assented in somewhat more cautious terms through a selection of Bushnell's statements tending in that direction, adding:

> In a high and true sense we may expect to see the principle of natural selection working to secure the triumph of Christianity. That, in fact, is what we do see, in the marvellous progress of Christian civilization.[3]

Characteristics of the Process of Salvation

Inevitable progress. To a greater or lesser degree all of the advocates of the New Theology adapted theology explicitly to physical evolution. They found in it a rational and scientific basis for their optimistic doctrine of inevitable progress. Spiritual progress was the product of the identical

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1. Lyman Abbott, The Evolution of Christianity (Boston and New York, 1892), p. 257.

2. Elisha Mulford, The Republic of God (Boston, 1881), p. 235.

3. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. 389.

principle which produces physical evolution.[1] Gladden repeated the steps and the terms with which Bushnell had argued that the incorporation of Christ into the race constitutes a progress which is so real that it appears to operate by natural law and the knowledge of it seems solid and scientific. But Gladden then inverted the argument to claim that we therefore find in this natural progress a solid, scientific ground which justifies the proclamation of the gospel, since physical and spiritual cannot be separated.[2]

Progress, both physical and spiritual, was thus the primary characteristic of the process of salvation for these men. Moreover, it was treated as a self-validating feature in this theology. Its description could rest entirely upon observation and experience. At the same time the notion of moral progress itself supplied the content of the term salvation, for many of these men. It was not quite so with Gladden. The suffering Christ was still central to Gladden's soteriology, even though as a moral example and teacher of the law of self-sacrificing love.

Society, and especially America, seemed plainly to be growing ever better. In the late nineteenth century it seemed to be rapidly approaching the apex of the long historical ascent. It was not there yet. There were still great challenges to be met in overcoming the evil which was left. But the sense of

1. Abbott, Evolution of Christianity, pp. 255 f.

2. Washington Gladden, Ruling Ideas of the Present Age (Boston and New York, 1896), pp. 294 f.

crisis as posing a threat of reversal or subversion of progress was now effectively glossed over in the great, unidirectional march of moral and spiritual evolution. The Kingdom of God was growing surely and steadily in society. The solidarity of the individual with his society was so complete, in this view, that the process in individual lives must certainly correspond to that of Christian civilization in its triumph.

A curious contradiction to this solidarism enters at this point, however. The goal of the process described as the development of a perfect humanity was the production of a perfect individual character in each individual man, even though there could be no such thing apart from the perfection of the social organism. Furthermore, when it came to the question of how to achieve social perfection this incipient modernism assumed that it would be produced naturally by a relative perfecting of individual characters within the present imperfect social organism. The very social solidarism which these men stressed, thus, was turned to the service of an implicit individualism at the level of the mechanism of the process and at that of its final goal. Individual character thus assumed a primacy in the process of salvation which was at odds with Bushnell's organic conception, though he had held it as the goal of the process.

<u>The degeneration of romanticism toward sentimentalism</u>. Concomitantly, the religious experience which held primacy in Bushnell's view of the process tended to become senti-

mental as Gladden employed it. Facing the problem of a dead, deterministic world of nature, Bushnell's romanticism had found the answer in moral and religious sentiment which affirmed the reality of a supernatural world of value, spirit and freedom. Now nature was no longer dead; physical and spiritual laws both reflected the same value-creating determinism as God and nature freely spilled over into one another. The structure of romanticism softened as it matured, until it became over-ripe with the illusion of the power of sentiment. Yet it cannot be a mere accident that this is what happened to romanticism everywhere. It contained the germ of that which spawned from its aging body.

The natural moral sentiment which lay beneath the surface in every human being waiting to be awakened now became the primary driving force for the process of salvation in a new way. It was not only expected to provide knowledge of the reality of God and spirit, but to dissolve evil and liberate the good in man by its own power as well. The wickedness of the few really corrupt individuals who most impeded social morality could be cut off from all channels of social influence through the power of the prophet to arouse the public's moral indignation against these individuals. This sentimental assumption is illustrated by Gladden's attack on the Tweed ring as acting editor of the New York Independent. Tweed's retort -- "What are you going to do about it?" -- Gladden mistook for a sign of Tweed's fear and trembling before the appearance of his nemesis, and replied:

> We are going to turn you and all your creatures out of your offices . . . . We are going to get back as much as we can of the booty you have stolen. . . . We are going to . . . send you to your own place, the penitentiary . . . . We are going to make the city and the whole country too hot for you. . . . God may have mercy on you; but as for us, we promise you that your ill-gotten booty shall be but a poor compensation for the inheritance of shame which shall be yours forever.[1]

The prospect of moral condemnation by the whole community, it seemed to Gladden, should be enough to reduce even such a rascal as he took Tweed to be to bitter tears of remorse.

The Modification of the Methods of Christian Nurture

The Institutionalization of the Means of Grace.

Both Finney and Bushnell had deliberately rejected the methods held by their predecessors to be appropriate to man's part in the process of his salvation, substituting methods which they recognized to be radical innovations. In this Gladden differed from them both. For he did not intend any departure from the basic method of Christian nurture set forth by Bushnell. Nevertheless, he did depart from it, and the fact that the departure was not at all radical obscured to him the fact that it had happened at all.

The process of institutionalization by which this happened was one which Bushnell had recognized as inevitable and had affirmed as appropriate and constructive. The form of Christian experience and the content of Peter's sermon at Pentecost, for example, were suited to that occasion but to almost no occasion

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1. Washington Gladden, Recollections (Boston and New York, 1909), p. 206.

since, precisely because "the whole scene . . . has scarcely a vestige of Christian institution in it."[1] The institutional character of Christianity, as it is acquired, "will, by a necessary law, bring in other elements whereby to shape itself and complete its organization."[2] Bushnell naively failed to see that the consequences of the application of this process to his own vision of Christian nurture would be the very natural progress doctrine against which he had argued so vigorously. A corresponding assimilation of the methods of nurture to institutional rather than truly organic channels was bound to take place. Gladden saw these consequences, and found nothing at all wrong with them.

It was a short step from Bushnell's conception of the impact of character upon character in organic community, with which Gladden began, to the development of a formal program of character training. But Gladden emphasized the teaching of the principle of love and the duty to act sacrificially for the good of one's brother man. The direct impact of character upon character was not mentioned. Gladden wanted to do something, not just be something effective.

Bushnell had insisted that Christian nurture gives grounds for a steady confidence in the outworking of the process of regeneration because of the sufficiency of the "Incarnated grace in Jesus Christ."[3] Gladden's confidence was such

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 126-131.
2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Supra, p. 148.

that his writings reflect none of the sense of risk or uncertainty concerning the outcome which was left in Bushnell. There was one threatening note in his view. The Kingdom might come by revolution rather than evolution if Christians did not act the part of love, But it would come none the less. He gave the same explanation of the ground of this confidence as had Bushnell. But his religious confidence appreciated the support which the scientific certainty of the effectiveness of methods based upon natural laws gave to it.

Gladden was careful to point out that "it is not wholly a matter of methods and machinery, for the spirit in which the work is done is the main concern . . ." Having said that, he proceeded to outline the former with an extensiveness that foreshaddowed the twentieth-century preoccupation with that side of religious education.[1] A host of new institutions within the local churches had now been added to older ones, providing a rich field for Gladden to adapt to the concept of Christian nurture through an organized program of church activities. He wrote about the Sunday School, prayer and "experience" meetings, social assemblies, men's, women's and young people's associations and missionary societies in the local church and efforts at inter-church co-operation, among other such efforts. Organization was drawn from Bushnell's emphasis upon institutionalization and his conception of its role in the church.

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1. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. v.

The Limitation of the Means of Nurture

In all of this apparent expansion of the means of Christian nurture there was actually a narrowing of the types of human relationships expected to channel this nurture. Bushnell's organic approach was inadvertently lost as some of the deep organic channels included in his methods were neglected in the process of concentrating upon others and scientifically refining their calculated use.

The sentimentalism which had invaded Gladden's understanding of the process of salvation focused all of his methods in the attempt to bring the power of Christian love to bear upon the individual's conscious sentiments and sympathies. These methods were thus confined largely to conscious teaching and exhortation appealing to man's better nature. Enlightenment about moral problems in society and appeals to an inherent sense of decency and sympathy for the suffering would cause love to be enacted rather than remaining merely a sentiment. Rhetorical and homiletic devices could be employed to produce dramatic results having utopian overtones. Bushnell's utopian overtones had been a little less prominent -- but not much. Finney was utopian, too, in a sense. His was an internal utopianism of the "Kingdom of Christ" in the heart rather than the external one of the Kingdom of God in society.[1]

It is appropriate to ask how different Gladden's methods were in actuality from Finney's. The differences seem to be largely formal. Gladden even admitted specific

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1. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God.

converting activities like those of revivals to a regular place in the process of Christian nurture, in carefully proportioned balance with household nurture, although he condemned revivalism as a system as sharply as had Bushnell. With his Emersonian stress on the immanence of God, he found the notion that God was not equally near at all times to be only poetically admissable. In our sentiments, He appears to us to be near at times and removed at others. This provides a justification for special measures when our sentiments grasp His nearness in a special way. Bushnell had recognized this as admissable in the light of the prevalent neglect of Christian nurture, but Gladden was ready to regularize and institutionalize it in a polite way.

His principal objection to the Finney type of method -- provided it was in proper balance with more settled measures -- was that it was embarrassing to human dignity. A person present at such a service may be willing to confess Christ but have good reasons for not wanting to do so publicly! Finney's mechanics put such a person in the false and embarrassing position of seeming to deny Christ. Furthermore, their very unusualness has a harmful effect. The appeal is legitimate provided only that it be regularized as a normal part of the church service and preserve the social amenities of middle-class culture.[1]

1. Ibid., pp. 389-400.

The Transformation of Dogma Into Ethics

The Culmination of a Long Process of Moralization

While Gladden's methods of Christian nurture took on a strange kinship under their middle-class skin with those of Finney, the substance of his doctrinal insights exhibited great affinities with the Unitarian position below their evangelical surface. With increasing stress on the immanence of God, salvation ceased to amount to a radical change in human nature, while all dogma tended to be interpreted through ethical categories.

The latter had long been a tendency of the New England theological scene. Christian ethics had been the dominant subject of Edwards' writings, but approached from a thoroughly theological basis. Hopkins' identification of Christianity with disinterested benevolence had consolidated the tendency to center theological interest in ethics, while retaining the formal doctrinal apparatus which later still characterized Tyler's theology -- and Finney's at those times when he considered himself to be speaking as a theologian rather than as an evangelist. Bushnell's attempt to derive the whole content of Christian doctrine from religious experience opened the way to the final culmination of this process in Gladden's practical mind. Since Christian experience centers about the will, in the operations of which Gladden now emphasized an unimpaired natural capacity for free choice between good and evil, the

reflectively discernible content of such experience seemed to him to be almost exclusively moral in character.

Sin as an Evolutionary Surd in Good Human Nature

Salvation was thus almost wholly a moral problem to Gladden. Although it retained a certain amount of ontological dimension, his understanding of salvation was mostly concerned with overcoming sin rather than death -- which was accepted as natural, the problem it poses being resolved largely by loose reference to the reality of the supernatural world when it was given any attention at all.

Sin was understood as moral evil in the human race, following Bushnell's conception but discarding the notion that it had broken loose in humanity from an original state of innocence. Rather it was the vestige of man's primitive origins not yet cleared away by the evolutionary process, consisting largely of the heritage of social ignorance and the failure to have completely outgrown selfishness and violence as habits of social relationship as yet.

The word sin, itself, occurs infrequently in Gladden's writings as compared with Bushnell's. The baser part of human nature to which it could be understood to refer was not really seen as a problem beyond human capacity to solve, despite Gladden's great concentration on overcoming its manifestations. This was especially true in the light of the immanence of God's power within humanity. Gladden agreed with Newman Smyth in considering the only view proper to Christianity to be a "broad,

healthy, social philosophy of human nature which is taken for granted in the Bible."[1] What passed for a doctrine of sin did not to refer to a radical problem in human life.

Lack of Need For a Radical Christocentric Salvation

Since the New Theology as a whole found nothing radically wrong with human nature and life, it saw little need for a truly radical transformation of life beyond what had already happened to a large extent in the course of man's evolution.

The freedom of the will. The freedom of man's will in the state of nature was taken for granted. None of the radically ambiguous consequences which Bushnell had seen there were seen by Gladden. No external assistance is necessary to make the human will truly free to enact the good or the evil. Such a freedom is man's by nature, since God is immanent in all nature. Gladden put it bluntly in the course of his argument against the classical economics: ". . . men are not moral beings, if the doctrines of materialism or of high Calvinism are true, and if the actions of men are determined by forces outside of themselves."[2]

The supernatural Christ and the human Jesus. The work of Christ in the process of salvation was now no longer a radical transformation, for much of it seemed to Gladden and his contemporaries to have been done already by

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1. Newman Smyth, Christian Ethics (New York: Scribners, 1892), p. 141.

2. Washington Gladden, Working People and Their Employers (New York, 1885 [1st ed. 1876]), pp. 36 f.

slow degrees in the evolution of man and especially in the rise of Christian civilization. Although Jesus Christ still occupied the central place in this theology there was less use of the term Christ, with its messianic and eschatological background, and more reference to the human Jesus. This theology was not Christocentric so much as Jesus-centered. The tendency corresponded to the wider American appreciation of German historical scholarship of the Bible and of the development of Christianity, with its interest in the historical Jesus.

Jesus' role was largely that of teacher of the moral law of life and inspirer of moral idealism through the example of his life. To enlist men's sympathies by the example of Jesus required that his quality of sympathy be emphasized as pre-eminent. The power of Christian love was central to the divine strategy for the perfection of man; but the meaning of love, though not divorced from justice, was sentimentalized nevertheless. Thus, as Charles Hopkins points out, the sympathizing Jesus replaced the suffering Christ of the Calvinism of the previous era.[1]

Hopkins remarks that Bushnell pioneered this feature of the "emasculated Calvinism" of Beecher, Brooks and Gladden.[2] In this he does Bushnell an injustice through lack of sufficient knowledge of the nature of this pioneering. This was true in that Bushnell threw over the whole approach of the substitutionary

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 19.

2. Ibid. Hopkins' lack of a close knowledge of Bushnell also results in his failure to realize how much of Gladden's writings were but an echo of Bushnell's very words, although Hopkins appreciates the deep debt of Gladden and the whole "New Theology" to Bushnell.

atonement. However, it will be recalled that it was not the sympathy nor the human moral perfection of Jesus Christ in Bushnell's view which accounted for his impact upon the characters of men, but the suffering of God himself which is revealed through the suffering of his Son. The love of God for man which is disclosed in this suffering is far less sentimentalized than that conceived by Gladden. Suffering is different from mere sympathy. Bushnell still retained an appreciable amount of the majestic sense of God's sovereignty captured by Edwards, despite the fact that he found Edwards' way of systematizing it intolerable.

"Christ's law of life," in Gladden's understanding of it, was a Christian love which resembled that of Joseph Butler rather than the completely selfless love of Jonathan Edwards' ethics.[1] Both self-love and self-sacrifice are necessary to society, and must be properly balanced. The love of neighbor is to be measured by rational self-love. Jesus teaches not only morality but prudence also, and Gladden's injunctions in behalf of the duties of charity and self-sacrifice in order to secure justice for the weak and downtrodden in society were usually qualified by some reference to their limitation by a reasonable degree of self-concern and interest.[2]

Although the Social Gospel was noted for its protests against social evils in the name of divine justice, this side

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1. Gladden, Recollections, pp. 298 f., 311.
2. Ibid. Also, cf. Gladden, Working People, p. 142.

of God's nature was actually diluted and restricted in the stressing of a somewhat sentimentalized version of His love. God's justice was a formal principle more than a historical activity of judgment on His part. It was the moral ideal of the Golden Rule taught by the human Jesus, the relevance of Jesus' law being based upon his participation in the whole range of human stations. It speaks to the laborer, for instance, because Jesus was a carpenter.[1]

The retention of supernaturalism. Despite the lower Christology of this emphasis upon the human Jesus, there was still a strong supernaturalism left in Gladden's theology. Jesus is still the superhuman Christ, even though that fact is apprehended through his perfection in human moral qualities and these constitute the substance of his revelation to men. As the head of the humanity which has evolved into the crown of creation, Christ "completes and explains the revelation which began with the beginning of the creation."[2] This disclosure of the moral ideal to the human mind and sentiments is what is necessary to effect salvation through the natural propensity of human nature to respond to love. That capacity is not re-created by the Incarnation of Christ, but is already present by virtue of the indwelling of the divine Father in all men, which is also the basis of the

1. Gladden, Working People, p. 51.

2. Gladden, Ruling Ideas of the Present Age, pp. 294 f.

"vital unity of the race" through which the revelation of the law of love is propagated.[1] The revelation having begun with creation and now having been completed and related to the whole of life, the Kingdom of God is itself immanent and natural to human society. "The immanence of Christ, the vital unity of the race, the presence of the kingdom -- these truths give to life a new sacredness and to duty a new cogency."[2] To the late nineteenth century the power of this newness seemed about to break all past bondage to ignorance and strife, and the final flowering of human perfection seemed just around the corner if Christian men would but lay hold of life with both hands and clear the final obstacles from "the future's broadening way."[3]

1. Ibid., p. 285.

2. Ibid., p. 280.

3. Washington Gladden, "O Master Let Me Walk With Thee," 1879.

PART III

CHANGING IDEAS OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER VI

FINNEY AND NEW REVIVALISM'S VOLUNTARISTIC IDEA OF THE CHURCH

Finney's conception of the process of salvation did not amount to a radical change in the ideas which he inherited from the older revivalism. It was an attempt instead to save the formal essentials of the old ideas through desperate devices which he felt were required by the desperate times. So it was also with his idea of the church. The newness of his idea of the church lay in the introduction of certain features comparable to his new methods in evangelism. The change did not alter the basic character of the church as a voluntary association. For Finney, the relations among believers are primarily face-to-face relationships of free individuals who have already taken, in conversion, the crucial step toward a completely transformed life of disinterested benevolence. The business of the church was to foster that "entire sanctification" of its members.

The Subsidiary Place of the Church

The conception of the process of salvation which characterized Finney's brand of revivalism resulted in a strengthening of the tendency to relegate the church to a subsidiary role in salvation. This tendency already had been reflected earlier as one aspect of the disestablishmentarian movement

in Connecticut which Lyman Beecher had so ardently opposed.[1] Finney is an excellent example of the increasing tendency of most nineteenth-century theologians to concentrate on the doctrine of man to the almost complete exclusion of the doctrine of the church. His idea of the church must therefore be pieced together from scattered contexts. Some of the gaps must be filled in by inference from his silences as well as from his assertions.

Why did Finney's revivalism result in a loss of the sense of community? It individualized church-life far more than had the older revivalism. Why did not the sharing of intense communal feeling and experience result in a thorough sense of being bound into a unitive community firmly associated with the church?

The Cultural Climate of Individualism

Characteristics of the period. This question is partly answered by the fact that a new individualism was on the rise in American culture already in the early period of the century. This remarkable period was characterized by a restless energy,

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1. Beecher had a strong sense of the importance of the church in which he contrasted with those more solidly within the Finney group. With the church rested the welfare of mankind and the nation: "Whoever shakes the corner-stone of this system will bring to dust the noblest edifice ever reared by divine and human cooperation!" Lyman Beecher, "The Design, Rights and Duties of Local Churches (1819) in Works (3 vols.; Boston and New York, 1852), II, 219.

by the rapid expansion of an open, dynamic society, and by a sense of unlimited opportunity. This does not fully explain, but surely contributed to the individual's confident feeling of moral and material power. The extraordinary passion of this period for all sorts of organized humanitarian movements is notable. This should not be seen as a contradiction to the judgement that it was highly individualistic. The voluntary, associational character of these organizations must always be borne in mind. It was also a period of widespread religious zeal for the permeation and influencing of every aspect of American life. Particularly notable about this period was its "ultraism"--in religion, in optimism, in individualism, in everything.[1] In short, it was adolescent. In all of these characteristic attitudes Finney shared to an eminent degree.

Persistence of the actuality of community. There was still a large reservoir of collective aspiration and fellowship which the earlier individualism of a few men like Benjamin Franklin had never dented. The actuality of community was not gone, but the truth is that a truly corporate dimension of human life was not one of the deep presuppositions of men's thinking in this age as it had been in Puritan times. Many of the old ties were dissolving. Under such conditions men

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 10-13.

may unconsciously feel a deep sense of isolation, and seek fellowship within small fraternities which preserve some of the values of community which the larger society is losing.

The zeal to convert and reform the whole world of mankind was as intense as ever, if not more so. This may well have helped to preserve the existence of actual community while individualistic assumptions were increasing. By Finney's time this passion for the coming Kingdom of Christ on earth reflected a distinct trend away from its earlier basis. Ever more confidence was being placed in the power of man's voluntary efforts to bring that end--gradually replacing a sense of its dependence upon God's predestination. This tendency was closely related to the general confident spirit of the times from which the nineteenth century's growing individualism sprang. In sounding this note Finney dimly foreshadowed the typical emphasis of the later Social Gospel upon "building the Kingdom of God."

The Emphasis Upon a Crisis Experience in Conversion

To point to the cultural climate of optimistic individualism as a salient factor is not to claim that it fully explains the diminution of attention to the church. The question of social causation is a difficult one; but we may with equal reason assume that the theological presuppositions of the revivalism of the period contributed their share toward

the rising phenomenon of cultural individualism.

Emphasis upon discontinuity. One such theological factor was the emphasis upon an experience of crisis and discontinuity in conversion to the almost total exclusion of any awareness of continuity, whether of sin or of grace. The Finney revival message and paraphernalia united to make the sinner intensely aware that he stood alone before the awful judgement of God. Under original sin he was justly condemned and isolated from any legitimate claim to moral approbation or support by man or God. The conversion process required him to be totally absorbed in his own subjective experience. First came awareness of mortal dread, in his "serious thoughts." Then finally the overwhelming feeling of gratitude for the undeserved mercy of God swept through him in his conversion. The utter subjective intensity of the experience separated him from the whole external world of fellow men, family, nature, possessions, all.

The same phenomenon can be found as a persistent quality in existentialism, whether that of a Kierkegaard or a Sartre or a Heidegger. Despite the intensity of the Kierkegaardian emphasis upon love and concern for the neighbor the sense of isolation from humanity persists. It is an open question whether there can be such a thing as a truly social existentialism.[1] A very similar emphasis upon the intense moment

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1. See Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr, Christian Ethics, Chap. xiv, esp. pp. 421 ff.

of subjective crisis as the self faces its ultimate destiny is central to Finney's revivalism.

Voluntarism in conversion and in the church. The concentration of the whole process of salvation into a crisis-moment in the conversion experience (plus a second one in sanctification, in Finney's view) was continued and extended from the older revivalism. It had its roots in the Puritan heritage. But there the church had played a strong role; and Puritanism can be called individualistic only with very stringent qualifications. The new revivalism differed from both Puritanism and the old revivalism in its overt stressing of the free act of the human will as the crux of conversion. The intensity of the conversion experience created a strong bond of community with others who had also undergone the experience. But under Finney's theory of conversion this was a fraternity which the individual could consider he had joined through his own free and unfettered act. The very existence of that fellowship was most logically to be regarded as owing to the voluntary acts of each of the associated individuals belonging to it.

The centrality of the revival. Finney's single-minded concentration upon the all-absorbing theme of revivals was notorious.[1] It left little room for attention to the relation

1. See Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, November 17, 1835, in Gilbert H. Barneo and Dwight L. Dumond, ed., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (2 vols.; New York and London, 1934), I, 243.

of the Christian to his fellow believers within the church in Finney's scale of what was important. This tendency was mitigated somewhat as Finney's views developed during his Oberlin years. The change was reflected in his increasing interest in sanctification, which ordinarily takes place within the church, as well as conversion, which is more frequently located outside the church. In spite of his increased concern for the church and its regular ministry, however, he never saw fit to think deeply or write extensively about it. His idea of the church suffered serious inconsistencies as the result of his lack of explicit attention to the subject.

The Effect of the New Measures on Cultus

Dissociation from tradition and church-order. All of this was intensified by the effect of Finney's new measures on the cultus of the churches which looked to him for leadership. These measures were not drawn from a church tradition. They commended themselves to Finney largely on the basis of his previous experience as a lawyer arguing his cases before juries of the general public. Room could have been made for them within regular church-life and order. But in many local churches they were, like a drink to the alcoholic, a continually recurring exception to the rule. They were needed just this once to get out of a desperate situation.

A rationale justifying them could have been found in

tradition no doubt. Scriptural evidence was indeed called up frequently to show that there was no exclusion of them by the Bible. On the positive side of the question Pentecost seems to have been frequently cited as a divine sanction of the revival as an essential.[1] Beyond this there was little effort to claim the backing of tradition it would seem. The effectiveness of the new measures and the desperate need of the times seemed to Finney an ample justification for them.

These methods, furthermore, were most at home in situations which were thought of as essentially extra-ecclesiastical. Such situations were the context of most revivals. Finney considered revivals to be the church's most important business. The vast majority of them were conducted in church buildings and under church sponsorship. But the whole cultus of the revival itself was addressed to the unconvinced and unconverted, who were regarded as not in the church as yet. Apologetics set the tone of the whole effort. Since the church itself was not especially the place for conversion to take place, a public lecture-hall--or even a dance-floor--was regarded as intrinsically quite as suitable. The missionary effort in general was seen as something located outside the church, though supported from within it.

Assimilation of church cultus to the revival cultus.

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1. See Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 126.

In actuality revivals were assimilated into regular church-life to some extent, as had been done for generations. When the new measures were imported with them, the centrality of revivals led to the orientation of all church cultus about this center. Cultus, in general, was thus progressively adapted to a lecture situation. Each individual in the audience was to be absorbed in his own private intellectual and emotional confrontation by the stellar personality on the platform. Finney strongly objected to ministers turning the pulpit into a rostrum for general lectures on morals or politics.[1] Ironically, Finney's interpretation of the "gaining of a new heart" saw it so much as a matter of understanding the truth, presented by the spirit through the evangelist's persuasion, that the preaching of the Word could not help being itself essentially a lecture.[2] Preaching was apologetically oriented rather than addressed to the increase of the faith of the congregation. This amounted to a significant deviation from the preaching-centered idea of the church belonging to the first of the three ideal-types which we have previously developed.[3] It was a deviation toward the third type in this

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1. C.G. Finney to Brother Cowles, printed in The Oberlin Evangelist, VII, No. 20 (1845), 155.

2. See Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, October 2, 1844 (Finney Papers).

3. Supra, pp.11 ff.

instance, with its tendency to emphasize belief more strongly than trusting faith.

This tendency was interestingly illustrated in certain facets of church architecture in this movement. Churches were built with sufficient capacity to accomodate large crowds far outnumbering the membership. Finney's merchant admirers undertook to provide him with an auditorium answering to his ideal specifications. The purchase and remodeling of the Chatham Theater in New York provided an eminently suitable ediface, which was not called a church but a tabernacle.

Lyman Beecher's deeper attachment to churchmanship is illustrated by the usual location of his evangelistic activities from a pastoral seat in a local church. Even he, however, had a special platform extending out into the audience built for him in his church. These features point up the extent to which attention was directed toward the personality of the preacher and the aura which surrounded his platform manner. The cultus so mirrored was all designed to pierce the individual heart by personal contact amid a mass assembly.

Lack of institutionalization of communal spirit generated in the revival meeting. Within the revival meeting itself the individualizing effect of these features of cultus was mitigated greatly by the sharing of great numbers of people in the struggles of the anxious. The bonds of community

were formed even more by the sharing of the whole assemblage in the overwhelming feeling of joy and love in each new conversion experience. The common spirit gathered increasing momentum with the increasing number who came forward. The revival audience was therefore not a passive one. Its cultus included a high degree of congregational participation once the process was set in motion. It was these revival meetings which popularized the singing of hymns to an unprecedented extent in America and inspired the writing of many of those which still dominate most congregational singing. The starting of the process and its advance from stage to stage still always depended heavily upon the crucial talents of the evangelist.

The most insurmountable difficulty was that of carrying over the intense communal spirit generated in the special revival situation into the regular cultus of the local church after the evangelist had left. Post-revival slumps plagued the footsteps of Finney and the others.[1] The primary carry-over was in the great impetus given to tractarian, missionary and moral reform societies. These activities, for Finney, were intrinsically linked with the gospel of disinterested benevolence. They were based upon the same ground as the church's inherent task of fostering entire sanctification after conversion. They were individual matters, formally

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1. See Fanny N. Dunton to Mrs. Finney, October 6, 1826 (Finney Papers).

outside of church-order, however.

Finney's attempts to institutionalize this impetus given to the common spirit within internal church life were weak in comparison to such extra-church organizations. They were confined to such local groups as the maternal associations and missionary societies, most of which had no formal connection with one another above the local level. Indeed he never had any patience with church machinery above the local level.[1] This is pungently illustrated by his reported remark that "there was a jubilee in hell whenever the Presbyterian General Assembly met."[2] He would have been no happier with the Congregationalism of the Saybrook Platform.

The Duality in Revivalism's Idea of the Church

Conversion as an important part of the process of salvation now stood outside of, or in tenuous connection with, the church. The church was conceived ideally as the voluntary association of the already-converted. When combined with the conviction that many actually in the church needed conversion, this conception led to a duality in Finney's idea of the church. A sharp distinction had to be made, tacitly if not explicitly, between the present actuality of the church and its ideal nature.

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1. See Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 64.

2. Remark quoted in George F. Wright, Finney, p. 266. Cited in Cole, ibid.

Every idea of the church must handle this basic duality in some fashion.

Finney's revivalism was innovating rather than revolutionary. It was natural enough, therefore, that this duality should be understood through categories which correspond roughly to the traditional distinction between the "visible" and the "invisible" church. Finney, however, was not able to make any distinction among men on the basis of their election! This way of analyzing the problem is furthermore always beset in the long run by another serious difficulty. The "invisible" norms which best capture the church's true nature are not easily related to any concrete present reality in the "visible" church because of the language used to distinguish the two. The former are apt to suffer from a certain ethereal quality making their relevance at times difficult to discern, while the latter suffers from a lack of consistent valuation and attention.

We now turn to ask how each of these two faces of Finney's idea of the church, which were never adequately reconciled, can be understood in the light of his conception of the process of salvation and by the use of the typology which we have developed.

The Present Actuality in the Idea of the Church

The Congregation and the Word

Finney's conception of the present actuality of the

church can be reconstructed in outline from miscellaneous descriptions of the "activity church" which prospered widely under his leadership and from his few remarks about it. The pattern of such a church, we find, was still one in which our first ideal-type (the congregation gathered by God's grace to proclaim and hear the saving Word from the Scriptures) can be readily recognized. The central act of the church was preaching and hearing the word of the Bible. This basis Finney had no conscious intention of altering by the addition of his new revival techniques and benevolent activities. The form in which he conceived this pattern, however, deviates significantly from that ideal-type. His deviation followed directions which the church already had begun to take before him, and which now were pursued farther.

Particularism and voluntarism in the definition of the congregation. The congregation with which the church was identified was each particular congregation. Finney needed no reference to a tradition to incline him toward the most localistic forms of traditional Congregationalist and Baptist polity. His own stubborn personality and the character of his conversion experience were sufficient to insure that, even if he had never known of such precedents. Furthermore, the congregation was not so much one gathered by God through His election as one which had itself come together, each member

of his own free will.

Exegesis and isogesis of the Word. Preaching went far beyond solemn and relevant proclamation of the Word. It became in essence more didactic, while at the same time becoming in manner colloquial and pointedly personal. Both features were reflections of Finney's concept of evangelism as extended argumentation through which the persuasion of the Spirit might operate.[1] The Word in the Scriptures was still indispensable in the process of salvation; but it was the truth, presented by the rather loose operation of the Spirit, which was most stressed. In keeping with Finney's interpretation of the Spirit, Scripture itself was unconsciously treated with a considerable amount of freedom, and even looseness, in interpreting its points so as to accord with Finney's doctrines of free will and sudden, total sanctification.

Movement toward the third ideal-type. It will readily be seen that each of the above-mentioned deviations from our first ideal-type leans in the direction of our third motif. In the third motif, the accent is upon a face-to-face community. In that motif the radical transformation of persons in love generally fosters a distinctive sense of spiritual freedom in doctrinal matters. This freedom is characteristically referred

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1. Finney, Memoirs, p. 83 f.

to the immanence of the Holy Spirit. Those aspects of the third motif are reflected in Finney's direction of movement. None of Finney's deviations noted above particularly suggests the features of our second ideal-type (the sacramental fellowship of the body of Christ). We shall see below that there were additional features of Finney's idea of the church to which the third ideal-type is even more pointedly applicable, and which are much more difficult to relate to the first ideal-type. First we shall follow up the application of our first type and those deviations which have been marked already.

The Church Needs Reviving as Well as the World

The saved and the unsaved in the church. In our first ideal-type the members of the church walk the precarious tightrope of Pauline faith. Throughout life they remain in need of continual relation to the saving Word which is ever manifested anew. They are in an important sense always in process so far as their salvation is concerned. At the same time they are under a powerful assurance, in faith, of salvation's present reality.

In Finney's view something of the same theme persisted. In the membership proper to the church there are both the saved and the not-yet-saved. For Finney, however, both conversion and sanctification were matters of an absolute either/or. The saved and the unsaved in the church are thus to be

thought of as two different groups of individuals rather than two faces of every church member. Every proper member is a "new man" in Christ, having a new heart which has turned him away from the "old man's" love of self and of the world. Not every proper member is a perfect man, and without his being so the process of his salvation is incomplete. In actuality, however, the churches are also filled with many of the "cold, stupid or dead" who did not belong there at all as yet.[1]

The congregation in its present actuality therefore includes de facto three separate states of men, two of which are also included de jure. For the sanctified, the church is no longer an instrument of their own salvation. It is a channel of the expression of their perfect benevolent love. Their role is to assist the rest. This group was heavily represented in Finney's "holy band" of assistants at revivals. The merely converted are still in need of further reviving until the moment of their "entire sanctification." Yet they can also be of assistance to those who have not yet passed through the beginning in an experience of conversion.

Some of the church members or attenders who are still sinners in need of conversion may already be "anxious."

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1. This was a particularly pungent epithet used by Finney for those who were cool toward revivals. See "Minutes of the New Lebanon Convention," New York Observer, August 4, 1827; quoted in Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 82.

Others in this category think themselves to be Christians already and are not yet under conviction of sin or even stricken with occasional "serious thoughts" of hell-fire. In either case they belong in the church so far as concerns their bodily location, but they should not yet be regarded as belonging to it. Most of these persons were expected to be reached in revivals conducted "outside" the church. Few men actually touched by these revivals were really totally unchurched, however. Most converts were already aware of the church and in touch with its life to some degree.[1]

The revival as the sole means for perfecting the church. The portion of the church belonging to both the second and third categories had to be accepted by Finney as an existing fact. The actual church badly needed reviving. He was supremely confident that it was reformable. He was convinced that it must be reformed if it is to be an effective instrument of the reformation of society at large. Revivals were imported into church services as a means of perfecting the church. The changing of hearts in revivals, however, is not to be thought of as just a means to the reform of either church or society. It is the primary business to which both of these latter ends are secondary.

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 90. Also, Gilbert H. Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse (New York and London, 1934), p. 25.

The reform of church and society was assumed to follow spontaneously from the total internal transformation of the inner man. Curiously, Finney somehow sensed the need for additional organized and disciplined effort to implement his concern for social reform. In this he stood out among his fellow evangelists. He seems never to have assumed that the reformation of the church needed such a consciously organized effort other than the highly-organized revivals themselves. He thought of even those efforts as directed at those outside the church proper more than at those genuinely within its internal life. The form of the revival was not even altered when it was employed inside the church to produce sanctification. If it works so well on the sinner, how much more effective it will be when applied to the already converted! Finney did not act consistently on the assumption that the church itself needed to be radically reformed, after all. This fact is illuminated by his basic assumptions about the invisible or ideal nature of the church, to which we shall turn presently. The categories which framed his thought gave rise to some real confusion between the normative and the actual nature of the church.

Church Authority Centers in the Evangelist

The authority of the Word and the authority of the evangelist. The actual locus of authority in churches

heavily influenced by the new revivalism was defined by the personal charisma of the evangelist, to a marked extent.[1] This fact is illuminated when it is understood in terms of deviation from our first ideal-type.

Under our first type the primary source of church authority is the Word of God in the Bible and its primary locus is the relationship between the minister and the congregation in the preaching and hearing of the Word. In the Finneyite churches the source of authority was understood to be the truth of the Word in the literal words of the Bible. The meaning of the literal word of the Bible is fixed. But it cannot be read off by the sinner through the divinely implanted light of reason as the Puritan assumed. This truth must first be presented to the mind and then to the emotions of the sinner through the Spirit's persuasive advocacy. This is legal truth like that of the corpus of common law. In practice, this opened considerable leeway in the Scripture's interpretation. Finney maintained that the evangelist himself is the prime channel of the Spirit's operation. The authority of the Spirit thus rested particularly in the hands of the evangelist. This authority characterized all of the

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1. This terminology is borrowed from Weber's well-known sociological set up in terms of his ideal-typical method in: M. Weber, Theory, pp. 324-423. For a definition of charisma, see pp. 358 f.

evangelist's revival activity, not just his preaching.

The charismatic quality, in other words, was inseparable from his own person. It even tended to depart when he departed. In many instances the evangelist's authority degenerated into a cult of personality centering about his leadership. Some particular personal feature of the evangelist frequently became a fixation among his followers. One cannot help being struck by the fact that the collected letters of nearly every one of these revival leaders contain a number of descriptions of his physical appearance. Especially frequent are descriptions of his facial features, often dwelling on some real or fancied oddity. Such letters were generally in answer to the request of a spiritual admirer. The feminine admirer's manner of describing the affection in which the evangelist was held quite often defies any distinction between the language of spiritual love and physical love.[1]

The truth of the Word was regarded as formal and unchanging. This authority was brought to bear upon actual decisions by the situational activity of the evangelist. He studied local conditions thoroughly. He then related the formal truth of the Word to the personal situation of his

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1. See, for example, Mrs. L.M. Gilbert to Mrs. Finney, February, 1828 (Finney Papers). Also Mrs. Frances M. Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (2 vols; London, 1832) I, 80 f., 96.

hearers by disclosing in his public prayers and exhortations the particulars of the individual sinner's sins. Everything in church life tended to center about the revival situation. The authority inherent in the revivalist in the revival situation thus dominated the whole of church-order.

Levels of authority above the local church. There were also some other strong centers of actual authority in the churches. Each, however, bore some relationship to the chain described above. These loci of authority were generally assumed, little trouble being taken to examine and defend their validity. Despite Finney's contempt there were levels of church authority above the local level, not only in Presbyterianism but also in Congregationalism. These presbyterian emphases in church-order had predominated for a century in Congregationalism. These authorities perhaps bore least relation to the revival cultus itself. This period was one of intense activity at those levels in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, especially in heresy trials. It was no longer a peak period of the real effective power of associations, consociations, presbyteries or general assemblies. That this was so was partly due to the fact that the standards which were regarded as fixed and unchangeable were actually in a state of flux. The lack of really effective power was one reason that such a continual flurry of prolonged and heated debate characterized these bodies. Although Finney and most of the other

evangelists of the new type were widely regarded as highly unorthodox, these bodies could actually do little if anything about them.[1]

The authority of the individual. Another somewhat more effective actual authority was the sanctity of every man's individual judgement. This was closely correlated with the assumption of the freedom of his will. This authority is intensified if the individual is a Christian. Both conversion and sanctification rested in Finney's view upon the individual's understanding the truth of the gospel. Possession of that access to truth is visibly attested by one or both of these concrete experiences. This recognition gave the individual church member a powerful claim to the authority of the Spirit in his own right.

The power of the individual was all the more effective in the case of wealthy merchants like the Tappan brothers in New York upon whom so much of the financing of both the revival enterprises and the "benevolent empire" of humanitarian societies depended.[2] After Finney's temporary falling-out with the Tappans in 1835 over the matter of degree in abolitionism, and similarly on subsequent occasions, Weld and his

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1. See, for instance, Beecher's cocky statements about his Western heresy trial and the division of his accusers in L. Beecher, Autobiography, II, 352.

2. This "empire" will be discussed in Part IV. For an excellent account of it see Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 103 f.

Oberlin friends bent anxious efforts to the appeasement of the Tappans. Finney himself swallowed his pride sufficiently to come East in the hope of personally effecting a reconciliation, although he did not back down on his position.

Nevertheless, among the varied operations of these seats of individual authority the evangelist stood far more than primus inter pares. Here was one more illustration of the ultraism of the age. The attitude of the devout tended to exhibit an ultraism in personal loyalty to such a man of God in those circles where his charisma was recognized and an ultraism in personal animosity toward him among those who did not recognize it. Either attitude was intensified by the very fact that the ministry in general still carried a very high prestige.

The Normative Ideal in the Idea of the Church

The ideal pattern which Finney held for the church has already come into our examination. Actualities which are accepted as ultimately good rather than bad or only provisionally good become a part of that ideal, and Finney liked to divide present actualities into such absolute categories. In examining actualities which were accepted into Finney's ideal of the true church we found that some of them could be understood by relating them to our first ideal-type. They can be seen as features of the congregation gathered about the Word.

The ideal pattern of the church, according to Finney's idea, seems so far to be most obviously related to that basic type rather than to the other two. But this is hardly the case when the picture is completed.

A movement to the third church-type. To stop there leaves the most distinctive features of Finney's contribution to the idea of the church out of our interpretation. Those special contributions are, on the whole, far more suggestive of the third ideal-type than of the first. The ideal church of Finney's heart did not finally center in the "hopefully converted." The frequency of "backsliding" and re-conversion in a number of these cases was bound to be embarrassing to revivalism's conception of the process of salvation.

The sanctification of the church and the church of the sanctified. This problem gave impetus to Finney's increasing preoccupation with sanctification. Finney longed for "something higher and more enduring than the Christian church was aware of ...altogether a higher form of Christian life."[1] At last he found it: entire sanctification. The ideal church is to be the voluntary association of those who have not been merely converted but completely sanctified in the righteous life of disinterested benevolence. Ideally the church must be the limited

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1. Finney, Memoirs, p. 130.

realization in the present time of the Kingdom of God on earth although Finney did not use those words for it. It is to be marked especially by the steadfast love which visibly differentiates the true brethren from all children of this world.

Finney's ideal church is a fellowship of perfected love. His doctrine of "entire sanctification" stated his conviction that such disinterested love represented an absolute reversal of the heart from evil to good. Without this "new heart," men are utterly incapable of "living to please God" instead of "loving to please themselves."[1] This is conversion. But the man is finally either good or bad according to whether or not he has stabilized this "new heart."

Sanctification, like conversion, is effected by the apprehension of the truth. The church is not the community of faith, as in our first motif, but of belief, as in the third. This presents the primary problem in the salvation of children below the age of such understanding--who otherwise are "more easily converted than grown people." "Faith" was defined for them by Finney as "believing what the Bible says, and acting as if it were true."[2] The church as purified is a fellowship

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1. Finney's address to the children of mother's in his Oberlin Material Association: MS Minutes, October 2, 1844 (Finney Papers).

2. Ibid.

whose action is visibly transformed by its belief in love. Finney enforced the standard of righteous and loving action by the exercise of direct sanctions, especially the ban.

In all of the foregoing respects Finney's idea of the church invisible--as composed of the already sanctified, and perhaps, in some sense, those who will eventually attain that state--is, point for point, suggestive of the third church-type.[1] Three respects in which this third church-motif is especially illuminating regarding Finney's idea of the church at the ideal level deserve special attention here.

Voluntarism in the Revival Church

The first is the impetus given by the ideals just traced to Finney's conviction that voluntarism is of the essence of the true church.

Moralism and voluntarism. Finney had accepted and intensified a notion originally springing from Hopkins' extrapolation from Edwards' conception of Christian love. The very substance of Christian religion is, for Finney, acting always out of absolutely disinterested benevolence. Christianity, in Finney's mind was thus totally identified with truly moral behavior. We must not forget that what makes behavior moral, for Finney, is not so much the act itself but the "heart" or

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1. Cf. Supra, pp.12 f.

inclination out of which the act came.[1] Nevertheless, Finney assumed that there were many acts which were prima facie evidence of an unloving heart. Such acts were in themselves to be labeled as sin.

Such a morality-centered definition of religion bears a close relationship to Finney's emphasis upon the human act of free will through which men enter this life of selfless benevolence. The progressive modifications of doctrine during the period since Edwards had come about in large part because of the increasing conviction that sinners cannot be held accountable as moral agents if they do not have free wills.

The third ideal-type centers ~~of~~ the church in morally-transformed personal relationships. It thus tends, in such a moral and intellectual climate, to associate itself with a voluntaristic conception of the mode of entry. The first motif, on the other hand, gravitates more logically toward an emphasis upon divine election and predestination as the mode of constitution of the church. The second motif leans more toward the church's drive to include men institutionally within its sacramental organism.

Predestination and voluntarism. A strict doctrine of predestination has always made any energetic insistence upon the contribution of man's will to salvation immediately suspect.

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1. Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, Oct. 2, 1844.

It has nevertheless necessitated no denial that there is an act of human will in conversion, so far as its great historical advocates are concerned.[1] A limited degree of voluntarism may be compatible with such a doctrine.

A much larger place was made for a voluntaristic note in the covenant theology of Puritanism than in high calvinism, although Puritanism was not so different from Calvin's own views as has often been supposed.[2] Voluntarism as the basic mode of constitution of the church is kept under sharp limitations, however, where it is combined with a relatively high doctrine of predestination. This doctrine Finney had discarded almost completely even so far as formal allegiance was concerned. Even too much talk about conditional election was apt to hinder revivals rather than help, he felt. There was nothing in his theology to impede a totally voluntaristic view of both the process of salvation and the constituting essence of the church.

The church as a wholly voluntary association stood on much the same footing as the many other voluntary associations organized for worthy moral ends for which men of the period showed such a fervor. In such a highly individualistic climate, men hungered for close community with others serving the same

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1. See, for example, Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), pp. 40 f.

2. See Everett H. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," Church History, XXV, No. 2 (June, 1956).

causes. This they could find by voluntarily joining a church or a benevolent society, without thereby contradicting their sense of self-determination. The church of this period thus retained some of the sense of belonging which was based in Puritanism upon the covenant idea. This was weakened, however, by the extremely individualistic basis of the whole association of believers in the church.

Koinonia in the Activity Church

The importance of this sense of inter-personal fellowship and its nature as conceived in Finney's idea of the church is the second matter which our third ideal-type helps to interpret.

A fellowship of loving action. Finney's great primary interest was the chaging of individual hearts. As with Jonathan Edwards, the genuineness of the transformation is to be put to the test of loving action. Finney was dedicated to the aim of transforming the world through organized efforts at moral reform, provided it be kept clear that individual conversions are basic to such a hope.

The converted were thus expected to turn their new benevolent zeal to sustained and energetic work in the moral reform of society through such organizations. Within these organizations the koinonia of love of our third ideal-type

of the church is a highly emphasized feature. Their whole existence depended upon such a lovingly-transformed constituency. In two important features, however, these associational fellowships deviated from our ideal-type.

The location of the fellowship outside as well as inside the church. In the first place, these groups were not confined to the church. They existed both within and without its defined limits. Those within the church were the very heart of the church itself. They were the primary vehicle of that part of the process of salvation about which the internal life of the church was oriented: sanctification. Here was the primary theological basis of the "activity church" concept. Sanctification was the basis for its Sunday schools, infant schools, prayer meetings, maternal associations, women's missionary societies, etc., meeting on a regular schedule in a dedicated round of activities. Although some of these were new, they were thought of as natural to the church as it ought to be. Such activities were indispensible to the expression of Christian benevolence on the part of the sanctified quite as much as to the sanctification of the converted. Revivals might equally well be conducted outside the church as such as within it. The traditional Sunday morning service now centered around revival preaching. Only the tradition of the centrality of the latter, therefore, kept it from becoming less central to church life than the fellowship within these

activity groups.

The parallel organizations outside the church were theoretically distinguished from it. Some of them were explicitly religious in purpose, while others were humanitarian in explicit basis. Examples of the former are the tractarian and missionary societies. The latter included such efforts as the temperance movement and the anti-slavery societies. Organizations of that type were given their main impetus by Christian leaders and members, but welcomed whoever would join in working for the cause to which they were dedicated. These organizations outside the church were in reality a part of the activity church, although not thought of as such.

Dedication to social action. The second respect in which these fellowships deviated from our third ideal-type was in their strong concern to transform the outside world. Their members did not rest content with the enjoyment of these little bands and the effort to bring others into the loving relationships which existed within them. The fact that the internal relationships of these groups had a highly organized character rather than an informal, cultic pattern derived from this social zeal.

Such a high degree of organization was inevitably accompanied by the exercise of a rational and technical authority on the part of lay leaders. Despite that feature the essentially koinonial character of these groups is revealed in

the great importance of the charismatic leadership of men such as Finney and his protege, Theodore Dwight Weld. We see here a similar duality of authority within the church to that already noted above.[1]

The Exclusion of the Unrighteous

A third point to which the third motif of the church is applicable is Finney's noted advocacy of direct and drastic sanctions to be exercised by the church against those who violated its internal standards of righteous life. Finney sought continually to keep his own zeal for social and moral reform and that of his followers in proper subordination to the concern to effect an internal change in men's hearts through the gospel. So also not every overt act of moral laxity or wrongheadedness was to call for immediate exclusion from the church. But every such act or attitude was to be regarded as a contradiction of the church's enforceable ideal standard of membership.

Reproof. Finney considered reproof of the individual for every such matter--however minor--to be the solemn duty of both the minister and the members of the church. This was to be considered an inevitable responsibility of the disinterestedly benevolent. It was to be discharged primarily for the

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1. Supra, p. 203 f.

sake of the soul of the erring brother, but was also necessary for the sake of the unsanctified brethren in the church who might be led astray by the presence of open sin in their midst. Finney's remarks about slave-holding may also be applied to lesser sins if we but diminish their intensity somewhat:

> What! shall men be suffered to commit one of the most God-dishonoring and most heaven-daring sins on earth, and not be reproved? It is a sin against which all men should bear testimony, and lift up their voice like a trumpet, till this giant iniquity is banished from the land and from the world.[1]

Exclusion. Over the period of a few years the sin of slavery grew more and more serious in Finney's estimation, until, in 1834, he declared that slave-holders were not Christians. If they did not respond to reproof they should be excluded from the church.[2] A sin of even greater magnitude, calling for like action, was drinking or selling alcoholic beverages. The churches "must cast out from their communion such members as, in contempt of the light that is shed upon them, continue to drink or traffic in ardent spirits."[3]

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1. Charles Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians (New York, 1837), p. 53. Also cf. C.G. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion (6th ed.; New York, 1835), p. 275, and quotation from Finney in Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr., "Charles Grandison Finney" in Christendom an Ecumenical Review, VII No. 4 (Autumn, 1942), p. 503.

2. The New York Evangelist, November 8, 1834. Also see Susan H. Ward, The History of the Broadway Tabernacle Church (New York, 1901), pp. 26 f.

3. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, p. 281.

If such a person appeared at church, the doors should be closed to him.

In the case of the temperance cause, even the failure to support it was aiding the opposition: "Resistance to the temperance reformation will put a stop to revivals in the church. . . . The man's hands are RED WITH BLOOD who stands aloof from the temperance cause."[1] The only Christian behavior was total abstinence. A man "is drunk, if you can smell his breath."[2] Such an attitude was not a foregone conclusion in the religious culture of the times. This is illustrated by the fact that drinking at ministerial meetings was still an accustomed practice in Connecticut Congregationalism as late as 1812, while the national temperance movement itself did not become firmly inclined toward total abstinence until the 1830's.[3]

Voluntaristic moralism and church-discipline. The exercise of sanctions against unrighteousness in the lives of church-members had its precedent in Puritanism, but Finney felt no need to justify it thereby. Sin was regarded by Finney as the voluntary act of a man whose will is stubbornly rebellious against God's law and whose heart is still centered upon himself. Whatever acts are condemned as evil are to be understood

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1. Ibid., p. 265.
2. Ibid., p. 145.
3. See Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, I, 245-251.

as signs of willful sin. It is within the power of the sinner to will to change his sinful heart. Failure to do so after reproof can only be construed as deliberate scorning of the church's central moral purpose. Failure to work devotedly to advance that purpose was basically in the same category. The words of a follower to Finney about a voluntary society which he was organizing for evangelizing the poor in his neighborhood, could aptly be applied by Finney to the church itself: "Every member must work or quit. No honorary members."[1]

Theocracy in Tension With Voluntarism in Lyman Beecher

A zeal for righteous purification in the church is not always accompanied by such a highly voluntaristic conception of the church's status in society and its method of constitution. That fact is illustrated by the case of Lyman Beecher.

Voluntarism and establishment. Beecher fought bitterly against the disestablishment of Congregationalism in Connecticut before the election of 1817, and feared that the end had come for the church with the doom of the establishment. Yet, within a few years he had begun a drastic change of mind about this.

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1. John Brooks to Finney, November 9, 1830 (Finney Papers).

> It was as dark a day as I ever saw. The odium thrown upon the ministry was inconceivable. The injury done to the cause of Christ, as we then supposed, was irreparable. For several days I suffered what no tongue can tell, for the best thing that ever happened to the State of Connecticut.[1]

He found that Christianity actually appeared to be growing in strength since the disestablishment. By 1819, he saw the rising voluntary benevolent societies as the chief instrument of the church's power.[2] These voluntary associations "make it their business, instead of Select-Men, to see that every family has a Bible, every church a pastor, and every child a catechism."[3]

It remained clear to Beecher, however, that the leadership of the nation by righteousness and morality was to be identified with leadership by the church. Beecher's ideal of a church-theocracy was comparable to the Puritan conception in one respect. It never offered the slightest suggestion that the authority of the church rests upon the authority of the state, while the state was expected to use its authority in certain ways which would practically enhance the church's status and the advancement of its goals. The church as a body

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1. L. Beecher, Autobiography, I, 344.

2. L. Beecher, Works, II, 219. Also, L. Beecher, Address to the Christian Public [of the American Tract Society] (New York, 1824), p. 5.

3. L. Beecher, The Memory of Our Fathers (New Haven, 1826), p. 12.

was to exercise its influence upon the leaders of the state, in contrast to Finney's inclinations in this matter.

Finney in tension with Beecher. Finney was more typical of the new revivalism at that point. He consciously sought no influence over the state for the church as such, while stressing highly the duty of the individual Christian to exert such influence. Politics is "an indispensable part of religion. No man can possibly be benevolent or religious without concerning himself to a greater or less extent with the affairs of human government."[1]

The pulpit should be a constant source of political education, but this should be by way of illustrations and the indirect labelling of the worst political sins by referring to them in prayers and sermons. Ministers are not to get out and work for the election of particular candidates--let alone (as was still frequent in Beecher's New England at the turn of the century) forming a caucus which, for all practical purposes, determined the nominations.[2] Yet the individual lay Christian's action was always expected to result in such things as temperance and Sabbath laws, as well as in individual transformations. These laws would in fact favor the church's moral interests, and--indirectly--its strength.

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1. Finney, Memoirs, p. 230.

2. Finney to Brother Cowles, in The Oberlin Evangelist, VII, No. 20 (1845), 155.

In the cases of temperance and slavery, the church itself should take direct action; but the action was to be taken against its own internal membership, and only thereby against political leaders who were also church members. The action of the church, in these particular issues, was itself expected to produce--indirectly--changes in public law as well as in public sentiment. All of this in Finney was expressive of a much greater degree of voluntarism than Beecher found to be needful in the idea of the church which was implicated in his juggling of divine sovereignty over against the freedom of the human will in conversion.

A Portrait of the Finneyite Idea of the Church

We may draw from the detailed examination above a thumbnail sketch which summarizes the idea of the church in Finney's circle of influence.

The Process of Salvation and the Neglect of the Church

Crisis and voluntarism. Finney concentrated the whole of the process of salvation into two brief crisis-experiences. These might coincide in time or might follow one another. Conversion is just a beginning and "entire sanctification" is necessary to complete conversion. In both cases, the experience is one of voluntary surrender of the inevitable selfish pride of the "old heart." This comes about under the Spirit's

persuasive advocacy of the truth of original sin, just condemnation to a literal hell, and unmerited forgiveness through Christ's substitutionary atonement on the Cross. The change is absolute, from total sin to total perfection. Consequently, the church is ideally composed of the local company of the perfectly benevolent. These individuals have voluntarily associated themselves through their individual voluntary decisions in conversion and sanctification. As an association of the perfected, the ideal church is not intrinsically beset by the continuance of sin among its true membership. Salvation is not really a process but a point-change. It has already been completed upon entrance into the ideal category of church-member. Thus, little attention is given to the inner church, other than some attempt to organize its benevolent energy more effectively.

Perfectionism and church-reformation. In actuality, the broader church itself needs to be reformed. Some attention must be given to the presence of sin within its confines. Yet even here the locus of sin is still primarily outside the walls of the church. A large step has already been taken toward sanctification in the conversion experience which admits one to membership. In the case of the converted-but-unsanctified and of the unconverted persons who are legal members by mistake, supreme confidence was placed in the new methods of evangelism.

Hence, no really serious attention to the problem of internal reform in the church seemed necessary to Finney. The energetic forwarding of revivals was primarily directed at those outside the church. Their secondary relevance to those within the church would suffice to achieve the necessary reformation there, and no further attention to the problem is needful.

The Method of Entry Determines Who Is Included in the Church

Voluntarism in the method of entry. Finney's view of the process of salvation dictates a voluntaristic method of the believer's entry into the church. The church is to rely upon an exclusively revivalistic means of recruitment for its membership. "Our very theory of religion is, that men are to grow up in evil, and be dragged into the church of God by conquest,"[1] remarked Bushnell. The unrevived individual at a revival is to be made intensely aware that he does not "belong." Any sympathy with the cause of Christ puts him under tremendous pressure to go all the way, especially when the evangelist emphasizes that nothing stands in his way but his own free will.

The voluntary fellowship of the righteous. Under such a voluntaristic mode of entrance into the church, its membership cannot be defined as the elect of God. For Finney, as for Wesley, all who have access to the Word of God are elect, but

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1. Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 36.

some persist in voluntary refusal to accept their election. The church includes, for Finney, only those who are righteous in Christ. Even the converted tend to become only provisional members--reminiscent of the "half-way covenant" despite the fact that they have had a conversion experience--because they may back-slide and require reviving again. The totally sanctified are the permanent members, secure against such a reversion.

The "invisible church" thus in fact tends to disappear from the idea of the church. It cannot be identified with the elect, since this category is now too broad. On the other hand, the standard for a visible circle at the center of the actual present church-membership tends to be identified with the perfection of the "invisible church." At the same time defections within the ranks, particularly when they become a sizeable trend, become an embarrassment to that identification of the visible company with the invisible ideal. This can only be explained away by reference to mistaken human judgement about the status of such persons. Such an explanation, of course, casts implicit doubt upon the same judgement in the case of those others who are presently still regarded as sanctified. Yet Finney's view, unlike Wesley's notion of sanctification, insists that the sanctified must somehow be identifiable. As he progressively came to realize, his idea of the church requires such a perfectionistic standard, supported by the threat of eventual expulsion. Thus there is really no way in

which the implicit contradictions within this idea of the church can be reconciled, on Finney's grounds. More than he knew, it depended upon the doctrine of divine election which he had rejected.

Authority and the Essence of the Church

The individualism of the Finneyite revivalistic conception of the process of salvation fosters a reluctance to come to grips explicitly with the whole idea of authority in the church. As a result, considerable confusion remains in Finney's idea of the church as to the nature and locus of the authority. Provision for continued responsibility is not adequately made. The impetus given to church-life by revivals is therefore not able to be conserved. Furthermore, the relation of authority to the constituting essence of the church remains inherently instable at the recognized level of evangelistic charisma, and little recognized at other levels. Consequently, there is little consistent and explicit understanding of what the essence of the church is.

Church-authority and evangelistic charisma. The basis of all religious authority is understood to be the literal word of the Bible as the Word of God. Such a literalism imposes rigid limitations at certain points; but its failure to recognize the existence of a problem of interpretation opens

a wide, unrecognized latitude within that area. This considerable area in actuality accrued to the evangelist. This was especially true in the case of a Finney, who claimed the evangelist to be the primary channel of the persuasive activity of the Holy Spirit (which, in fact, had to include the whole interpretive function). The personal charismatic authority of the evangelist was crucial to the success of the new measures, despite the usefulness of such technical adjuncts as the anxious bench and the protracted meeting. That authority thus became the primary visible locus of authority in the whole life of the church. No attempt was made to justify this authority by reference to tradition or anything other than the internal experience of those who accepted it. Personal charismatic authority requires no other justification than its immediate recognition in the leader by the followers.

Such a type of authority resides in an important sense with the followers, for it disappears immediately if recognition is withdrawn for any reason. This kind of authority was well suited to Finney's emphasis on the merely persuasive power of the Spirit, and upon the crucial role of the individual's voluntary determination of all of his loyalties and affiliations. Thus the individual believer is himself an important second locus of authority. He is not denied the appeal to reason, Scripture, conscience or even charismatic guidance of his own by reason of lack of ecclesiastical orders.

The validity of the ministry of the evangelist himself depends only on a call by the Spirit, and upon his results in reaping a harvest of revivals. He need not be ordained to the ministry of a denomination, although he usually will be. If he has any trouble with stated denominational authorities, he may move to a more "democratic" denomination as Finney did, or shuttle back and forth between them as Lyman Beecher did. This may be done with ease and without affecting his following in the denomination from which he has removed. He would not be seriously impeded by remaining a layman, if necessary. Much of the revival activity was located outside the church proper, and under no effective ecclesiastical supervision. The considerable influence accorded to clerical status, furthermore, rested primarily upon the recognition accorded to being "a man of God" rather than on upon the legal or traditional status of the office itself.

The Koinonia as a ministry to the world. In one important sense, then, the church does consist essentially of a ministry--but it must be understood as the individual ministry of every man who is called by the Spirit, which is to say every actual Christian. To this extent the church is not collective at all. Every Christian believer is a church in himself in his individual minstry to his fellow human beings in danger of perdition. It was largely the overpowering prestige of the

stellar evangelists like Finney, and the paler echo of the same spell in lesser lights, which held these individuals together into a koinonia of disinterested benevolence. There these intensely individual wills were surrendered in love and directed to a common cause in moral and humanitarian activity. To the extent that this happened, the church approximated Finney's ideal of the loving association in missionary service to the world, comprised of those reborn to and perfected in righteousness.

That service, itself, required a high degree of organization. Organization, in turn, required rational and technical skills and financial resources--all of which actually carried a degree of authority along with their possession. Finney accepted and encouraged such organization, but had no theological rationale for relating this type of authority to religious authority. For its realization Finney's ideal church required suitable organizations outside the church into which benevolent energies could be channeled, and through which fellowship could be maintained. During his prime, he commanded the resources of wealth and organizing skill necessary to maintain these organizations on a scale large enough to keep all of the members of the church active. This he did through the hold which his evangelistic prowess gave him over certain key lay personnel in society and in the churches. With the evaporation of the revival climate Finney's ideal church was

left high and dry--no longer able to command the reforming zeal and the resources of leadership and wealth necessary to realize it. Its failure was due in part to its own intrinsic defectiveness in relating both of them to the internal life and order of the church. Both the virtues and the defects of Finney's understanding of the essence of the church and the basis of its authority can be seen to reflect his understanding of the nature and operation of the power which converts and transforms the individual believer.

CHAPTER VII

BUSHNELL AND ROMANTIC ORTHODOXY'S ORGANIC IDEA OF THE CHURCH

The Comprehensive Idea of the Church at the Center of Bushnell's Theological Work

A Re-examination of the Nature of the Church

Bushnell's organic church as the basis of christian nurture. Bushnell keenly felt the inadequacy of the whole revivalistic view of the process of salvation. That view characterized the religious climate in which he had grown up. Christian nurture was the outgrowth of Bushnell's pondering over the death of two of his children in infancy. He began to realize that the revivalistic view, with its grim implications for any hope of infant salvation, was by no means the only one. The Coleridgian supernaturalism which had opened his own way back to intellectual reconciliation with Christian orthodoxy provided a basis for a better view. Had such a conception governed the life of the churches and the social climate instead of the revivalistic view, he became convinced, the quiet, deep Christian faith of his own parents surrounding his childhood would have made unnecessary any distinct point in his life when he was not actually a Christian. He might also have been spared his excursion into doubt.

According to his new conception, the process of salvation is a genuine process covering the whole life-span of

a man. Family, church and social climate must all play crucial roles in it in thorough interrelationship. Each of these circles is a genuine organic community. Each interpenetrates the others, its boundaries including the same men who are also members of the others.

When Bushnell implicitly defined the church as that organic community within which salvation is in process, therefore, he was not thereby excluding the process of salvation from the family and society. Each of them is included in the community of the church just in so far as each is a locus of the process of salvation. In this fusion, however, the church by its nature, and not the other communities of human life by their own natures, provides the ground of possibility for the working of the process of salvation within the organic whole and for the contribution of family and society to the process. The church is itself the real foundation on which the process of salvation as christian nurture stands.

Bushnell's attention to the nature of the church. Horace Bushnell conceived and depicted with some explicit concern a comprehensive idea of the organic church. This is not to say that he set forth a full systematic elaboration of the doctrine of the church, nor that he was interested in doing so. In this area of theology Bushnell was a seminal thinker, much as Coleridge was in the whole field of theology. Bushnell was scornful of the preoccupation with systems, and preferred a piecemeal approach. He was far

more disciplined in his work than was Coleridge, however, and his whole body of thought is highly consistent.

Bushnell fits the general pattern of the nineteenth century in never having tackled the nature of the church as a stated topic. He did give a great deal of attention to it, however. Scattered throughout his sermons and writings -- from his first published sermon, The Crisis of the Church (1835), onward -- there is constant attention to aspects of that question. In the long run he touched upon most of the main problems. Bushnell's direct theological effort was concentrated upon the doctrines of man and Christ, not upon ecclesiology. Yet the truly distinctive feature of his reinterpretation of these doctrines is its foundation upon the restoration of an organic understanding of the nature of the church.

Although he detected naturalistic dangers in Bushnell's Christian Nurture, Charles Hodge expressed his agreement "with but slight dissent" with Bushnell's treatment there of the organic nature of the church.[1] Munger rightly assessed the real intention of that central book: "In its theological significance it is a rejection of an individualistic theory of the church, and, incidentally, of its method of growth, and a return to the corporate theory of growth by nurture."[2]

1. Charles Hodge review in The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review (1847), p. 27.

2. Munger, Bushnell, p. 86. (Italics mine.)

His work did not center in ecclesiology but his thinking did center in the ecclesia.

The Social Nature of Man as a Basis for an Organic Idea of the Church

The Social nature of man. In Bushnell's view man's very selfhood is thoroughly social in origin and nature. The will of the individual develops as he matures. It is dependent -- at first almost totally -- upon the parental will for its governing function, becoming more independent by degrees. It never becomes completely independent of this social connection with the wills of parents and with the general will of each organic human community in which he shares a common life.

The will is not defined as merely a faculty, but in such a way as to make it the seat of selfhood. A real freedom to govern self-activity by its self-determination is of the will's very essence. A true will, and therefore a true self, does not yet exist as a realized actuality until a real measure of independence is acquired. Thus the self arises into being only through a social process, and it remains in the social process of becoming a full self throughout earthly life.

These organic ties form a general will for each particular human community. Each such community is joined to others, in overlapping ascent to finally embrace the community of mankind as a whole. Bushnell regards human life

as always ordered in this fashion into a few great "organic forms." These primary forms, Bushnell states, "God has appointed for the race." Presumably they are to be regarded as orders of Creation, although he does not explicitly use the term. The state, the family, the church and the school are those which he lists.[1] Each of these is always an essential part of organic human life wherever man exists. This does not mean that these ubiquitous "forms" remain the same in all physical and spiritual features throughout time and space. Bushnell regards all such things as participants in a historical evolution. They are bound to a tradition, but tradition itself is continually formed and reformed in the historical process.

The organic nature of the church. These great forms are themselves organically interdependent. The most basic of them is the family. Upon its unity depends the organic unity of each of the others through the unity of the will of the emerging individual with the will of his parents. The organic unity of the church itself depends upon the natural unity of the family. Through this connection with the church the family may fulfill its role as "the church of childhood," for the family is inevitably the primary locus of the crucial early phases of the individual's process of salvation.

Bushnell's discussion of "The Organic Unity of the Family"

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 91.

is therefore the place where he lays the foundation for his organic idea of the church.[1] Bushnell clearly marks the family unity as being inherently as powerful in the process of destruction as it is in salvation. The church depends in a real sense upon that family unity; but the continued unity and fruition of the family itself and in turn of state and school which depend upon it, is finally dependent upon the distinctive supernatural salvation which only the church provides.

The church is itself one of the natural organic "forms," organically incorporating the spiritual directions which men always have. These spiritual directions destructively disorder one another, however, except as their genius is reversed by the will disclosed in the supernatural act in history of God in Christ. This restorative and unifying supernatural will is what differentiates the Christian church from the "church" as merely a generic "form" in human life. With that general "form" the Christian church shares a common natural organic basis. Without Christ, however, the natural church has only a human will to guide its potentially saving life.

The Duality in Bushnell's Idea of the Church

In this basic distinction we can discern a duality within Bushnell's idea of the church. It is a different duality from that within the revivalistic idea of the church

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1. Ibid., chap. iv.

held by Finney, however. The difference reflects their two different views of the process of salvation.

For Bushnell the church is, from one angle of approach, one of the natural organic forms instituted by God in His creation of man as a being who is social in nature. Under this aspect, the Christian church is a particular instance of the generic form. It is one concrete community extending throughout the world whose boundaries, although overlapping those of other communities, are definite and theoretically definable.

Viewed from another perspective, the Christian church is whatever community -- regardless of where it is found manifested or in what form -- within which the work of salvation is in process. There is here a sense in which the state, the school, and especially the family, each is the church when its members are permeated by the church's supernatural salvation.

The duality between these two viewpoints regarding the church is fundamentally a reflection of the duality between nature and the supernatural, as Bushnell distinguished and united the two. It can be described in terms of the "visible" and "invisible" distinction -- but only if those two categories are re-interpreted by referring them to the visibility of natural and the invisibility of supernatural realities. The duality in Bushnell's idea of the church is held in tension and harmony through his reconcilia-

tion of nature and supernature rather than being left at loose ends as happened in Finney's idea of the church.

The Church as an Organic Form Rooted in Social Nature

The Church Embraces but Is Not Confined to the Particular Congregation

Nominalism and realism. As an organic form of life which is generic to all human existence the church must always be understood as an institution in the generic sense of the word rather than as a collection of the particular instances of that institution in one locality. Such universal forms are real to Bushnell and their reality forbids the complete nominalism with which Finney identifies the church only with the particular local congregation.

Bushnell's metaphysical realism at this point may be seen in relation to that of our second ideal-type of the church. Here the emphasis is upon the organic body of Christ whose reality transcends all of its parts. On the other hand, Bushnell's realism is a moderate realism, which recognizes that such universal forms do not have reality without existing in particular instances. This gives Bushnell a basis for regarding church bodies above the level of the local congregation as genuine and necessary manifestations of the church itself. At the same time it illuminates for us his life-long dedication to the pastoral leadership of one particular congregation.

The importance of authorities above the local congregation. Bushnell's respect for the validity and importance of church bodies above the level of the local congregation is illustrated by his action during the period when the Fairfield West Association was attempting to bring him under trial for heresy before his own Hartford Central Association, and then before the Consociation.[1] Under a particularistic interpretation of Congregational polity and tradition, he could easily have chosen to ignore or denounce on principle the interferance of an Association to which he and his congregation did not belong -- or of one to which they did belong, for that matter -- into the affairs of a local congregation. The fact that those who differed with him in his own congregation and Association stood behind his essential orthodoxy would have given additional justification to such a stand, which some of his friends urged him to take. He refused to challenge the right of Fairfield West or of the Consociation to take such action. The Consociation re-opened the case in his Association upon Bushnell's own motion,[2] without which this would have been impossible to do. It was with regret that he consented to the decision, made by his congregation without any prompting on his part, to withdraw from the Consociation voluntarily in order to prevent the endless repetition of such actions in the future. This it did after the issue was settled for the time being by lack of support of the charges.

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1. Supra, p. 117 f.
2. Munger, Bushnell, p. 150.

The importance of the local congregation. Bushnell's dedication to the life of his local congregation was remarkable for those restless times. The fact that he remained in his first pastorate at the North Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, throughout his working career until his retirement in broken health in 1859 is surprising in view of his amazingly expansive interests and talents. During that period he gained nation-wide attention as an able and original thinker, writer and speaker. This came to him through the publication of his sermons -- some of which were widely used in politics, as we shall see -- books and lectures, and through his wide travels. Much of his time for travel and the writing of books was the incidental by-product of his search for renewed health at several points during his ministry. His first concern was always not to neglect his responsibilities toward his Hartford congregation, and he never did.[1] He remained at Hartford at the cost of refusing two highly tempting offers of college presidencies. The first was that of Middlebury College, which was at the time (1840) a center of the Coleridgian thought which he found so congenial. The second was that of the soon-to-be-established College (later the great University) of California, which he helped to conceive and realize, selecting the site at Berkeley and awakening local interest on his trip there in

1. Ibid., p. 60.

search of health in 1856.[1]

His remaining at North Hartford is all the more remarkable when one recalls that Bushnell himself did not think of his own parish as essentially bounded by territorial limits but as extending throughout the world from that geographical foothold.[2] Even the Pope and his subjects were made the official objects of Bushnell's personal pastoral concern.[3] Bushnell's high degree of concern for his particular congregation can be understood by relating it to the strength with which our first motif of the church (the congregation gathered about the preaching of the Word) permeated and shone through the organic emphasis which is illuminated by the second motif.[4]

The Church Is Corruptible and Reformable Like Other Human Institutions

The corruptibility of the church. Like the state, the family, and the school, the church owes the present state of its form and spirit to human as well as divine agency. Each of these natural communities of men is in a real sense a living organism with a life and collective will of its own rather than an arbitrary creation of men's wills and minds which can be manipulated as a means

1. Ibid., pp. 60, 202 f.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. See Bushnell, "A Letter to His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI," (dated London: April 2, 1846) in Bushnell, Building Eras.

4. Supra, pp. 11 f.

to an end. Yet men can voluntarily direct the life of each such community in the same way and to the same extent that they can direct their own life-activities. Thus the church like the others is an instrument of human voluntary as well as involuntary enchancement or destruction of life. The church as an organic institution ordained by God is not thereby safe from human perversion by sin or by faulty understanding; and it can pervert the rest of the organic communities of man as well as vice versa:

> Sometimes parents fail of success in the religious training of their children, because the church counteracts their effort and example. The church makes a bad atmosphere about the house, and the poison comes in at the doors and windows. It is rent by dividions, burnt up by fanticism, frozen by the chill of a worldly spirit, petrified in a rigid and dead orthodoxy. . .[1]

The reformability of the church. If the church is an ambiguous instrument meant for good but susceptible of being bent to evil, Bushnell's confident assumption of the task of rectifying the ills described above is testimony to the fact that he regarded neither its divine constitution nor its depth of human perversion as making it irreformable. Tradition -- even twisted tradition -- has a certain givenness about it which must be accepted and respected, for there is truth and validity in the worst of it. But tradition itself is always reformable. It is also always in need of reformation for two reasons. In the first place, salvation within the church is a process in which some sin

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 51.

is always left to be overcome. Secondly, the church's forms must always be changed because "the moral import of actions [or rules or forms], physically the same, is . . . ever changing . . ."[1]

The organic status of the church, with its continuity through historic tradition descended through a real chain of physical as well as spiritual communication from the primitive church, is perhaps best interpreted through the use of our second ideal-type of the church. Bushnell's insistence upon the church's radical corruptibility and reformability, however, cannot be understood except by reference to the persisting centrality of the first ideal-type to Bushnell's idea of the church. Recognition of the echo of the radical Pauline and Reformation understanding of faith -- humanly precarious, yet divinely the ground of steady confidence -- is finally indispensible to an understanding of Bushnell's treatment of the relation of the will to salvation. Through that avenue such an understanding of faith constitutes the nature of the church in the last analysis, in Bushnell's idea. Through the wills of the members of the body of Christ, this faith enters into the corporate will or spirit of the church which is formed of the deep organic ties among those individual wills.[2] There it plays the same decisive role in

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1. Bushnell, Work and Play, p. 51. See Supra, p. 126.

2. Supra, p. 141.

the life of the church as it plays in the life of the individual believer because only through its presence in that corporate life is it received by the individual.

Church Tradition and The Role of the Church in History

The church's history. The church like other organic bodies has a history of its own by which its present life is influenced for good or ill. It is continuing to make its history by the exercise of its corporate will in decisions and responses which will have their effect upon generations yet unborn.[1] Yet we have just seen that the church's tradition is reformable and that it possesses within its life and will a renewing power which breaks its bondage to the pernicious and the outmoded in its own past. This power has its only real and effective source in the incorporation into the race of the supernatural grace in Christ. This alone can break the bondage of the individual self to its own fatal past which perpetuates its rebellion against the will's true government by God's righteous law.

The church is the community of that part of the race in whose controlling organismic will or spirit the will or Spirit of Christ is incorporated. It is the organic community of true natural manhood -- of humanity which is true to genuine human nature as opposed to the denatured organic

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 103.

community of revolted humanity which nature disowns. The restoration of the fullness of human freedom and self-determination under the re-established guidance of the law of right is in process in the corporate life of the church. Only through that restoration can any of the other organic institutions of the race be liberated from their bondage to the destructive processes which beset them out of their own respective pasts.

The role of the church in world history. By virtue of this status, Bushnell sees the church as having the crucial role of turning the world's history into a history of salvation. Such a role is made possible by the special degree of freedom to influence the course of historical events which flows from the supernatural spring of the church's life. Its role is exercised by the infusion of that life into every other organic community through the deep channels of interaction among all such communities. This grand vision is best set forth in Crisis of the Church, Bushnell's first published sermon, occasioned by the mobbing of William Lloyd Garrison on the streets of Boston.[1]

This early work is permeated by Bushnell's nationalism, by the brash self-assurance characteristic of his youthful period, and by a narrower denominationalism than is characteristic of his mature thought. Its main outlines, however, were persistent ones in his thought and were never

1. Horace Bushnell, Crisis of the Church (Hartford, 1835). What Bushnell had to say about the views of Garrison and his antagonists will be related when we examine his social strategy.

repudiated in the slightest degree. During these years Americans were generally caught up in a sense of the immanent future's tremendous portent for unprecedented good. Among men of the circle of Finney and Lyman Beecher, as among many other Americans, this expectation was conceived especially in terms of the triumph of personal religious piety from which all else would follow. "Dr. Beecher says 'he would rather live in this day than in the meridian splendor of the millenium,'" wrote one admiring lady.[1] In this spirit Bushnell shared, with no less enthusiasm.

It is significant that Bushnell, unlike Finney, brought the church itself into this rosy picture and placed it squarely at the center. In Crisis of the Church, Bushnell interpreted this great turning-point foreseen in the world's history as one in which America's emerging role was to be the key-stone. Yet fundamentally it was seen as an unprecedented crisis in the historic church's internal life.

It was a typically Bushnellian crisis. It had come into being because of what the church had accomplished in its past development. It was now brought to a head by the presentation of an unexpected new opportunity in the opening and development in America of a new world, blessed with the almost unbelievable material resources for which Bushnell had an uncanny eye. New possibilities were thus opened to the

1. Laura F. Judd to Mr. and Mrs. Finney, October 30, 1827 (Finney Papers).

church which heretofore had been unimaginable. These could be realized by a bold, immaginative and energetic response which would transform the church itself to a new plane of existence. At the same time, the crisis had its threatening side. Failure to respond would not mean a preservation of the status quo, but a decline before the power of those forces which would seize the opportunity and use it. The characteristics of internal church-life described above seemed ominous to Bushnell.[1] They pervaded the church's present condition and stood in the way of the needed response to this crisis.

Congregationalism "in spirit," he says (Bushnell, even then, at least refrained from identifying this exclusively with the denomination of that name), is the spirit of "complete Protestantism". This he identified in turn with the spirit of "simple original Christianity."[2] It needed a new nation where it could mold institutions from their very inception in the light of Christianity alone, without the legacy of ancient "tyranny and idolatry" or medieval "chivalry and Romanism."[3] On this new soil republicanism in government was born of the Protestant spirit of pure Christianity, according to Bushnell:

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1. Supra, p. 239.
2. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 9.

> Philosophically it must have been; historically it was. Self-government in religion passed over, by a natural and necessary consequence, to beget self-government in law; and that same equality, which was held in the church of God, extended itself to the civil state.[1]

America had been put on this earth to be the testing ground for this new religious experiment -- Protestantism and democracy. To make the test a convincing proof to the whole world of the way of the future in religion and government God sent both Protestantism and Romanism, "our Enemy," to the new world, "that we may prove ourselves together on the American shore. Behold the result!"[2]

The significance of this unique opportunity for the church is to be seen in the fact that the development of America's material resources will make available "the power, that is to send the gospel through the world."[3] As beneficial and effective as are the energetic voluntary societies dedicated to advancing this missionary purpose, the real burden of its execution must inevitably fall upon a whole nation of individuals who are united in a sustained organic life and will directed to the purpose:

> It is obvious, in the mean time, that societies cannot proceed in this work beyond certain limits. There is a natural limit to the funds, which charity will commit to an association; and if there were not, such establish-

1. Ibid., p. 10 f.

2. Ibid., pp. 12 f.

3. Ibid., p. 13.

> ments are rather fitted to give the prime impulse to so mighty a work, than to conduct it to a complete issue. Ere long then a people will be demanded, upon whom it can be thrown, as a work of private obligation.[1]

The Church-State

The kind of church required for the world mission of Christianity. What is needed, then, is the church itself rather than limited associational societies. But furthermore a church is needed which has become substantially co-extensive with the nation as a people of God. This will not be a state-church in the sense of enjoying legal establishment or formal control of government functions or policies. Bushnell's great dream of a "church-state" is strikingly like the ideal of a "national church" envisaged by the social Christianity of F.D. Maurice in England. Maurice may have had some influence on Bushnell's thought, although Bushnell seems not to have acknowledged it, if so. The government is not engaged in missionary activity as such and the church is not engaged in the function of ruling the nation in civil matters. The real communities of church and nation, however, have become identical. They are integrated in life and will and all of the corporate obligations of this community are the individual obligations of every member.

The transformation of the church. Changes in both form and substance may be expected to accompany this spiritual transformation, in the church and re-

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1. Ibid., p. 13.

ligion as well as in civil life. Bushnell's description of the new forms in the ideal church to come was set forth in his later years in an article entitled "Building Eras in Religion."[1] The spirit of this coming age is suggestive of Paul Tillich's conception of a "theonomous culture."[2] In "Building Eras in Religion," Bushnell foresees a new era of creative imagination in architecture and monumental feats of inspired church building. This will surpass the great past climax of the age of cathedrals to which so many unimaginative minds still remain bound, he tells us.

Rejected forms and the ecclesiological norms on which they rest. Symbolizing the new theonomous relation of religion and life in the heart of this people of God great "temples" will stand throughout the vital heart of the nation. There will be as many of them as are needed to accomodate all of the people of a region. Gone will be all heteronomy. "The immense imposture of the Popehood" -- and all priesthood -- will go down, the liberated minds of modern men presumably being no longer susceptible to the pretense of infallibility or authoritarianism in any form.[3] Such a temple might be called "a Koinonial, or House of Communion," Bushnell suggests, but not a cathedral.

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1. First published in Hours At Home, Vol. VII (1868). Republished in Horace Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), Part I.

2. Paul Tillich, Protestant Era.

3. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, p. 27.

That popular architectural idol has ecclesiological feet of clay to the eye of this apocalyptic prophet:

> Knighthood and grim war flavor all the grace there is in it. The worship too, is to be altar-worship; not as commemorating the offering once for all, but before and around the grand altar set in the focal point of the ediface, where priests are to be waving their incense, and offering always Christ's new-created body for the people to worship. They come as to an offertory therefore, and not as to the hospitality of a "table." Meantime, the structure itself is called a cathedral, because the bishop is conceived to be sitting in cathedra there, as presiding in the functions of his spiritual lordship. The preparations of the place, grand as they are in their forms, have a look that is partly alien; representing the swollen pomp of authority, and back of all, a power that deals with religion specially, as being patron to it, and having it in charge.[1]

We have noted Bushnell's consistent use of the metaphor of the body of Christ for the church's organic reality, his emphasis upon its continuity through its tradition and through its basis in natural law, and his centering of the process of salvation in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ and in His Incarnation which is continued in the church.[2] All of this points strongly toward our second church-motif. Nevertheless, as the passage just cited illustrates, his interpretation of these themes in the final analysis deviates so heavily from the ideal-type of the church as the body of Christ centering in a ministry and sacraments as to prompt us to turn to one of other two ideal-types for his primary interpretation.

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1. Ibid., pp. 23 f.

2. Supra, pp. 11 f.

To do so is indeed illuminating. Yet the center of his idea of the church still proves somewhat elusive under these two types, especially when we consider his outspoken criticism of the ideal conceptions of the church which usually have borne the closest relationship to each. This may be illustrated by citing his remarks enumerating various sources of the objection which he felt to be current to his contention that the cathedral age can be surpassed by a new age of church-building:

> . . . is there to be no other? The architects will answer, No; because the capacities and combinations of lines are exhausted. The high-going ritualists will say, No; because the cathedrals represent the ideal age of the church and religion beyond which nothing more advanced is possible. The plain people will say, No, for humility's sake; imagining that all high building slurs the spiritualities; not observing that our truest littleness consists in doing our greatest things for God. The last-days people will say No; because the end is at hand, and there is no time left for any building era to come. Another class will say, No, more argumentatively; alleging that a worship for the eyes, as in the lifting of the host before vast multitudes of people, must give way henceforth to a preaching and hearing exercise, and accordingly that only small edifaces will hereafter be wanted; such as may be called audience rooms and used as stands for preaching.[1]

One can scarcely miss the striking extent to which the purity of the Word-centered type of the church is reflected in the rejected ideal of the last-mentioned class! Bushnell's own answer is a resounding "Yes!" -- flung in the teeth of these various theological and technical objections. The non-

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1. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, pp. 17 f. (italics mine)

theological objection of the architects is answered by pointing them to the startling freshness of Ezekiel's theonomous vision of the procession of worshipers moving in and out of the walls of the Temple, tier upon tier. Here is a fresh and realizable architectural point of departure which has never been carried out. He declares that "the Holy Spirit organizes, himself, the communion of saints, and will as certainly make places or build houses for it in his times."[1] He did not go so far as to say that the Holy Spirit would do this without architects.

Koinonial themes in the forms of the church-state. The internal spirit of Bushnell's description of the coming great church is most illuminated by the concept of the koinonia of our third ideal-type. It deviates from that concept in Bushnell's insistance that this church depends on the energetic transformation of a whole society -- and ultimately of the whole of this world. It is a church for present history: Although it may mirror and prepare for the Kingdom of God to a certain extent, is not to be thought of as incapable of being realized until the final realization of the Kingdom.[2] In addition, Bushnell stresses in developing this very koinonial theme that the koinonia requires the incarnation of religious spirit and grace through the sacramental use of nature in symbols, liturgical forms and buildings. This emphasis seems to be little illuminated by our third type, and closely related to

1. Ibid., p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

the second:

> . . . every religion, which has power to get historic place in the world, comes to flower, sooner or later, by asserting visibility and permanence in stone. It builds, and by that token challenges a right to stay, and be known for the ages to come.[1]

Thus Bushnell proceeds to offer us his new koinonial idea of the church fully clothed in a suitable embodiment, as a better alternative than any of those suggested by the objections acknowledged in the passage cited above:[2]

> We are to look, in particular, for something more nearly in the type of the Pentecost, and the new brotherly communion there displayed. . . . It might have been called the House of the Dove, or, tipped with Spirit-fire on all the summits without. . . . No matter what the name, if only we distinguish the thing; a temple for the communion of saints and their worship in the Spirit, vast enough to take in all the immense crowds of pilgrims there gathered; "Parthians, and Medes, . . . [etc.] . . ." -- all brothers now in the brotherhoood of Christ begun, -- breaking bread together, and joining in the solid unity of their worship with all gladness and singleness of heart.
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> it will be the grand new birthday morning of Christian brotherhood. Protestant is no more, Catholic is no more, but Christ is all, and there will be no cathedrals large enough to be more than side chapels of the Grand Houses of Unity now required. St. Peter's will now dwindle to a toy, and the great Koinonials, if so we please to call them, -- cathedrals they will not be, -- will so far have their place. There will be no pulpits, it may be, or preaching stands; no altar, for the sacrifice is ended, gone by for ever; no priest or priestly vestments, for Christ the only and last priest is gone up on high; there will be no dividing screen behind which, in their choir, the canons are heard chanting out of sight in male voice only: but the whole wide space within, crowded from wall to wall with its many thousand worshipers, will be itself the choir, canons all themselves, male and female, lifting their own grand hymn, or Hallelujah together; so that, as the gospel itself is not a salvation for half the world but for all, the glorious sopranos will now have

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1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Supra, p. 193.

> their part, floating clear above and fluting heavenly sanctities on the top of so great masses of sound.
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> [This new stage of history will also see] the final reconciliation of science and religion. There is no real discord between them. The natural and the supernatural, science and faith, have a unity of relation as complete as any right and left hand. And yet it has not hitherto been easily discovered. . . .
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> [The new worship, therefore] will be the Creator-worship and Redeemer-worship joined, and the assemblies will want spaces and symbols in which the brotherhood of all fact and truth may be fitly acknowledged.
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> Probably never, in the most advanced age of religion, will our small structures, called churches, be dispensed with. They are, and are always to be, our synagogues, standing in the succession of the synagogues, and not in the succession of the temple, as many are forward without right to assume. These had no priesthood and no altar. They were the people-houses of religion, where they came together every Sabbath, to read the word, and offer their interpretations, and blend their prayers. And these synagogues were the really interesting places of the old religion, far more interesting, in most respects, than the temple. . . . [In them, the apostles] found a place and freedom for their testimony. Hither, in like manner, we must come for all high schooling in the faith. Here we get our incitements, corrections, reproofs, consolations, sacramental food, and dearest helps of brotherhood; for as these were always, so are they always to be, our schools of godliness.[1]

He assures us that this marvelous new church-state is the communion of earthbound saints in history to come rather than the "heavenly city" of "The New Jerusalem" in "the perfect state of the blessed hereafter." To this he admits it is related, but only through a definite if continuous transition.[2] Nevertheless it strained the credulity of even his own optimistic contemporaries. He recognized that it would: ". . . it is the peculiar fault of our great expectancies that we do not expect anything."[3]

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1. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, pp. 24-29, 33.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 18.

Nevertheless, "We. . . need to understand that this is the day of small things, and not despise the day of small things because a greater is to come."[1] Hence his continued devotion to the small, local congregation of the present churches, whose continued usefulness in the new age he discussed in the passage cited above.[2]

The failure of the coming great church to come. His grand vision certainly stretches our credulity no less, particularly blessed with the hindsight with which we are favored. Still, it provides for us a revealing insight into Bushnell's own ideal for the church as he would like to have seen it realized, and, indirectly, an illuminating glance at the actuality of the church of his day as seen through his eyes.

As for the realism of his ideal for the church of his own times, it stands up poorly under serious examination. We can understand how he could think of it as a realistic proposal rather than an illuminating vision when we realize that Bushnell looked upon an America which he understood to be in its infancy. It had been born of good parents and was still as pliable in will and habits as is the young child. Soon it would settle into a permanent pattern, for good or ill. The pattern would be one of infidelity or faith, authoritarianism or democracy, materialistic acquisitiveness or evangelical love.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 33.
2. Supra, p. 252.
3. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, pp. 17 f.

In the situation as he understood it we cannot blame him for casting his lot with the side he chose in this crisis of national decision. We can question the adequacy of his understanding of the nature of the crisis he saw. We do not take issue with his contention that most minds cannot envisage the possibility of something which has never been done before.[1] But we must add that there are some minds which are a bit too much preoccupied with impossible possibilities in time and history to be able to estimate actual possibilities very realistically. Whether or not the will of God would have had it so, we know that men would not. It was upon men that Bushnell himself laid the onus, God having provided the opportunity and the transforming power of Christ's gospel. Despite his retention of a significant recognition of the problem of sin and its persistence in the best of things human, he grossly underestimated its weight. In this lay his mistake, and not in his estimation of the power of the gospel.

There is no such potentially-rich area unfettered by a long religious and political tradition left upon the face of the globe today as that which was America as Bushnell understood it. Indeed it is doubtful whether there ever was such an America other than in the minds of Bushnell and many of his contemporaries. Even he underestimated the immense economic potential of America. But he underestimated the obstacles to the realization of his dream even more seriously. One of Bushnell's greatest defects

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1. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, pp. 17-19.

in estimating his situation was his failure to realize the extent to which the long arm of tradition and culture from the old world had already, inevitably, penetrated the new world. Men brought it with them even in the first pilgrimage of the Puritan spiritual revolutionaries who founded his "simple original Christianity" of the spirit of Congregationalism.

As a child of his age, Horace Bushnell was a Christian transformationist who assumed that more of the transformation had already taken place than a present-day historical reckoning will bear out. Neither his best hopes nor his worst fears for the Christian church and American society were destined to be realized during the century following the publication of his plan for the coming great church.

Perhaps the same judgment upon the defect of naive overconfidence is declared by the disposal which fate has made regarding his prediction of the final reconciliation of science and religion. A reconciliation was indeed made, and upon Bushnell's grounds. For many a romanticist or Kantian it still stands today as a fully satisfactory resolution of the problem. To those who will not tolerate a metaphysical dualism, of however limited a kind, this basis has remained unacceptable. Yet either party to that argument may well hold judgment in reserve as to the finality of that or any other resolution of the problem of science and religion. The foundations of science today seem once again to be in flux. It is by no means clear as yet whether the problem will even bear the

same form in the future as it has in the recent past. Yet Bushnell is correct in asserting that some attempt at reconciliation between man's knowledge of nature and of spirit must inevitably play an important role in any full idea of the church.

Consensus and authority in Church-Order.

The origins of the church's present problem of authority. The selections examined above from one of Bushnell's first and one of his last essays on the church do not suffice to give us an adequate picture of his views on church authority. The picture thus far is weighted somewhat too heavily toward simple individual and congregational autonomy. We must recall that under his theological method we must always balance his protests on one side of an issue (against authoritarianism) against those on the other side (against individualism):

> All our modern notions and speculations have taken a bent toward individualism. In the state, we have been engaged to bring out the civil rights of the individual, asserting his proper liberties as a person, and vindicating his conscience, as a subject of God, from the constraints of force. In matters of religion, we have burst the bonds of church authority, and erected the individual mind into a tribunal of judgement within itself; we have asserted free will as the ground of all proper responsibility, and framed our theories of religion so as to justify the incommunicable nature of persons as distinct units. While thus engaged, we have well nigh lost, as was to be expected, the idea of organic powers and relations. . . .
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> For though we have gained immense advantages, in a civil, ecclesiastical, and religious point of view, by our modern development of individualism, we have yet run ourselves into many hurtful misapprehensions on all these subjects, which, if they are not rectified, will assuredly bring dis-

> astrous consequences. . . . for the very change of view, by which we have cleared individual responsibility, in our discussions of free will, original sin, and kindred subjects, has operated, in another direction, to diminish responsibility, where most especially it needs to be felt; that is, in Christian families.[1]

Thus Bushnell clearly indicates that the problem of the maintenance of a necessary degree of order and authority in the church is rooted in the handling of the problem of original sin and the will in the process of salvation. We must remember that the problem of authority within the family is always reflected in the church's life because Bushnell understood the Christian family to be "the unit of the church as well as of society" and the crucially formative church of childhood.[2]

The freedom of the will under sin. Some light is shed upon Bushnell's sense of the importance of church authority, in contrast to Finney's disdain of both existing authorities and attention to the problem, by marking Bushnell's differences from Finney in explaining the process of salvation. The differences focus at the point of treatment of the freedom of the will in relation to original sin.

Finney retained as stern a formal doctrine of original sin as any conceived by his predecessors in history. But its sternness was largely formal. For Finney, original sin brings guilt and thus God's absolutely just condemnation of the unreborn undividual; but it in no way fetters the sovereign self-determination of the individual will. That remains absolutely free throughout the process, he assumes. Finney's work can be regarded as an effort at theodicy which took the form, not of mitigating the estimate of the fate of the unconverted under the power of

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 91 f.
2. Munger, Bushnell, p. 77.

evil, but of vindicating God's absolute converting power to overcome all evil in the world. This he tried to do by proving that God, working through Finney and his methods, can convert and perfect everybody irrespective of time, place or condition. The methods of conversion which proved so effective required stressing the perfect freedom of man's will to make the change at any time or place.

Bushnell's work may be understood as an effort at theodicy which took a different tack. He could not accept any theological "sophistry" which would represent a just and loving God as restricting Himself to a process of salvation which necessitates the damnation of infants too young to have entered such a process. The alternative was a conception of the process of salvation as one in which the individual can participate through corporate relationships before having the power to make voluntary choices among rationally discriminated alternatives.

The individualism and voluntarism of the process must thus be mitigated in favor of organic participation in the saving process. It must not be lost entirely, however, if the individual is not to be held guilty and justifiably condemned by God for the collective participation of all men in original sin prior to the age of free moral choice. The only other way around this conclusion is to give up a real notion of original sin entirely, and with it all basis for the conviction that there is anything seriously wrong with human life and nature.

Neither sin nor salvation, then, rests entirely in Bushnell's view upon the free determination of man's will, which he asserts still exists under sin but is impaired in its power for good. For Finney, on the other hand, salvation rests upon persuasion, deferring to the sovereign will and intellect of the individual. For Bushnell both sin and salvation also rest upon a power outside the individual "which cannot properly be called influence" (a term connoting persuasive power consciously used, as Bushnell points out), but instead is exerted unconsciously and undesignedly but inevitably, "as absolute force."[1]

At the same time this view does not conflict with the "proper individuality of persons and their separate responsibility" because this power operates internally, through the individual's own will.[2] In the maturing process it remains there throughout life in changing balance with the will's own autonomous role in salvation. The will always has a genuine -- though never an absolute -- freedom of self-determination.

Implications for church authority. The mind and will of the individual, therefore, can never be the sole locus of authority in the church. Individual centers of action and belief must be held responsible to the corporate mind and will of the Church,

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 92 f.

2. Ibid., p. 95.

which is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. That corporate mind and Spirit must be solemnly represented in a constituted ministry of clerical and lay officers of the church having different rights and duties. It must be institutionalized in church laws, in an electoral process of recognized authority, and in assemblages representing the mind and will of the church within and beyond the boundaries of the local parish.[1]

At the same time, individual conscience and freedom to testify in the Spirit as did the apostles must be preserved and fostered. This witness must be provided with the opportunity to exercise authority through church elections and by appeal to recognized laws of faith and order. The offices of the church and their tenants must never be allowed to usurp the spiritual lordship of Christ and to deal with religion "specially, as being patron to it, and having it in charge."[2] There must therefore be a balance between stated and recognized authority, on the one hand, and the constant necessity to cultivate and respect the consensus of the membership of the church, on the other hand.

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1. Ibid., p. 137 f.

2. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, p. 24.

The authority of the Word as truth and as law. The authority of both the individual and the corporate ministry of the church to the world within and without its boundaries is based ultimately on God's truth and law. For Bushnell as for Finney, the revelation of this central divine truth and law comes primarily through God's Word in the Scriptures as in our first ideal-type. Secondarily, its effective human appropriation is mediated through nature. Behind their formal agreement at this point there was a real difference between the two men.

Bushnell and Finney agreed that God's truth and law, in Himself, is absolute and unchanging.[1] Finney, however, did not think he needed to suppose that God's activity in relaying His truth and law to men ever varied in type or degree. God's Spirit is always and everywhere equally at work in the same persuasive activity. It is man's free response or resistance upon which his salvation turns. Bushnell, on the other hand, agreed that God's activity in salvation never varies in degree with place, time or human condition. But he asserted that it is infinitely resourceful in its relational variation in kind. It must be so because He is continually relating Himself to changing human beings.

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1. Supra, pp. 79 ff, 127, 155. See also Cole, Northern Evangelists., pp. 208 f., for some illuminating remarks concerning Finney's little-recognized pioneering of the famous "Higher law doctrine".

In the thought of both men, God's truth and His moral law enjoy substantial parity. A rule of Christian belief must always be understood to be a rule for the governance of moral action. For Finney, a standard of doctrine which is accepted as Biblical is to be applied literally to both belief and action. For Bushnell, the authority of doctrinal standards and moral law cannot be drawn so simply from their literal form in the Bible. By recognizing this problem Bushnell was able when he wished to do so to accord the real Biblical standards a somewhat greater practical authority than did Finney, who could more easily change them without knowing that he was doing so:

> It is important to notice, as connected with the subject of language, that dogmatical propositions, such as are commonly woven into creeds and catechisms of doctrine, have not the certainty they are commonly supposed to have. They only give us the seeing of the authors, at the precise stand-point occupied by them, at the time, and they are true only as seen from that point, -- not even there, save in a proximate sense. Passing on, descending the current of time, we will say, for two centuries, we are brought to a different point, as when we change positions in a landscape, and then we are doomed to see things in a different light, in spite of ourselves. It is not that the truth changes, but that we change. Our eye changes color, and then the color of our eye affects our seeing. We are different men, living as parts of a different system of things and thinkings, denyings, and affirmings; and as our contents and antagonisms are different, we cannot see the same truths in the same forms. It may even be necessary to change the forms, to hold us in the same truths.[1]

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1. Bushnell, God in Christ, pp. 79 f.; cf. p. 81.

The same point applies to a positive statute of revelation, it will be recalled.[1] Both Scripture and the church's past codifications of doctrinal and moral orthodoxy, therefore, take on authority for the church of a later day only as their truth is related to men at that point in time through a process which takes this relativity into account.[2]

Ministerial authority. The authority of the minister therefore depends in part upon the education and training of his mind and of his teaching abilities. This is needed that he may feed the intelligence of his flock and lead them safely through the mental pitfalls on the way to the apprehension of God's truth and law.[3] His rational skill gained by study and intellectual ability is not an authority in its own right, however. It is a strictly instrumental aid to the understanding and relevant communication of God's truth and law.

As a pastor of a church he stands not as a private individual but as the official representative of God's Truth and Law before the congregation.[4] It is within his right, his duty and his ability to declare

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1. Supra, p. 157.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 138 f.

4. Horace Bushnell, "American Politics" (Sermon) in The American National Preacher, Vol. XIV, No. 12 (Whole No. 168) (December, 1840), 191.

the moral law and to relate it to current moral issues in the politics of society at large as well as to those within the church's internal life.[1] This is to be done from the pulpit, with the same authority with which he proclaims and relates the gospel to which the law is always to be kept in inseparable relation. This is illustrated by and explicitly defended in his politically-influential sermon preached at the height of the Clay-Polk campaign in 1844, indirectly but unmistakably attacking the spoils system and the immorality of Clay's action in the Missouri Compromise.[2] The same authority is claimed in his "Discourse on the Slavery Question."[3]

Bushnell obviously could not have agreed with Finney's technique of setting individual sinners apart from the righteous company of believers and denouncing not only the sin but the sinner by name in public worship. He did agree that specific events and practices in local community and nation which were morally offensive must be identified, related to sin, and denounced in the name of the gospel. By the same token, right policies and actions should be praised -- although not

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1. Ibid.

2. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God (Hartford: Edwin Hunt, 1844).

3. Horace Bushnell, A Discourse on the Slavery Question (Hartford, 1839).

represented as perfect.

Church authority and controversial social issues. Leading ministers of the whole theological stream which we are tracing in this study agreed almost to a man that politics is a moral matter which the minister has the right and duty to bring into the pulpit. In this they still stood squarely in the line of their Puritan heritage and continued to do so into the days of the Social Gospel. Said Henry Ward Beecher: "It is the duty of the minister of the Gospel to preach on every side of political life. I do not say that he may; I say that he must."[1] In this he spoke for Finney as much as for Bushnell and Gladden and Lyman Beecher.

Bushnell agreed with Finney that such moral education from the pulpit should be kept solidly related and subordinated to the gospel itself. But even Finney was anxious to make it clear that:

> ... at the present time there is a peculiar call for ministers to be unusually explicit, frequent, full, and pungent upon the subject of electing their representatives to act in our halls of legislation, and I do not believe that in general, ministers err on the side of paying too much attention to this question . . . . But as a general thing I am satisfied that the error is on the other side . . . . The pulpit has been too long almost silent upon this subject.[2]

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1. Henry Ward Beecher, Freedom and War (Boston, 1863), p. 295.

2. C.G. Finney to Brother Cowles, The Oberlin Evangelist, VII, No. 20 (1845), 155.

And Finney injected a note which might have come straight out of Bushnell's Christian Nurture:

> it ... is wise in ministers ... teaching upon the subject of politics, ... to hold forth ... incidentally and by way of inference and remark on almost all occasions ... then it will never be necessary for them to leave their congregations or turn aside ... wholly to preaching and lecturing on politics .... Such a necessity, if it be indeed a necessity, has arisen out of too general a neglect on the part of ministers ....
> .....
>
> ... when the lay members of a church are asleep, or are all wrong on political subjects, there has manifestly been a great want of ministerial faithfulness, and in such cases ministers should redeem the time and come out faithfully and thoroughly, acknowledging their past delinquencies and giving the people appropriate instruction.[1]

The difference between Finney and Bushnell was not over the fact of the duty and authority of the minister to lead the congregation in every moral and spiritual concern of life. Nor was it over the ultimate source of that authority in God's law as revealed in His Word in Scripture through the Spirit. The difference was in the manner and the extent to which that authority was to be articulated in the church. This difference was rooted in their respective understandings of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation. Each saw a different relation of the Spirit to the will of the individual believer. Accordingly the role of the minister and of the community of believers in the process of salvation was differently understood by each.

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1. Ibid.

The Church as Whatever Community Within Which Salvation Is In Process

The Church Centers in a Supernatural Will

The second pole of the nature/supernature duality in Bushnell's idea of the church can in no way be divorced from the first. It has inevitably entered into the foregoing discussion. The religious community as one of the general organic forms of natural human life is inevitably seen by those Christians who so recognize it through the eyes of participants in a distinctively Christian community. The viewpoint, like the community, itself, Bushnell would agree, is informed by the Spirit or will which provides the distinctive supernatural basis of the Christian church.

The identity of the church to Bushnell's viewpoint depends upon its distinctive supernatural basis. This basis is <u>incarnated</u> in the church; but as a "comprehensive will" or "spirit" rather than as a set of formal characteristics. Although spirit creates appropriate forms, the church is not constituted basically by its form, as it is under our second ideal-type.

> ... there is a peculiar spirit in every church. Whether you take the larger divisions, the Jewish, the Greek, the Roman, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Congregational, or descend to the particular churches of a given city, you will find something characteristic in

> each -- a common power, which gives a common stamp to the members peculiar to themselves. Or, if you visit a Quaker settlement, where a few men and women are gathered into a kind of church family, you will discover that the members are pervaded, all, by a peculiar spirit, as distinct from the world around them as if they were a new discovered people. And these Quaker settlements may be taken as a kind of intermediate link between the church-state and the family.[1]

The Aim of the Will of the Christian Church Is Christian Nurture

Now a will is essentially a center of the purposive direction of self-activity. It is distinguished from other wills or spirits by the law or purpose in accord with which that activity is directed. The purpose of the Christian church is to foster the process of salvation through the work of Christian nurture.

This nurture comes about through the participation of the individual will, in conscious and unconscious ways, in the religious experience of the community of the church. For this purpose the organic unity of the church and that of other organic forms of community were ordained by God:

> ... we are met by the broad principle, that Christianity endeavors to make every object, favor, and relation, an instrument of righteousness, according to its original design . . . The only supposition that honors God is, that the organic unity, of which I speak, was ordained originally for the nurture of holy virtue in the beginning of each soul's history; and that Christianity, or redemption, must of necessity take possession of the abused vehicle, and sanctify it for its own merciful uses. That an engine of so great

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 104 f. See also passage, p. 104, cited Supra, p. 141.

> power should be passed by, when every other law and object in the universe is appropriated and wielded as an instrument of grace, and that in a movement for the redemption of the race, is inconceivable.[1]

The source of this redemptive power does not lie in the engine of organic unity itself. That power must be appropriated and directed by a redemptive will if it is to be an instrument of grace rather than fostering sin and dissolution. Its source of power is "a fund of increase in the very bosom of the church itself."[2] Those organic communities which are so appropriated, beginning with the family, undergo a transformation of their corporate wills through the formation of the wills of their members. Through the connection of the wills of their members with the corporate will of the church, these other organic communities are bodily drawn into identity with the organic community that is the church:

> The organic unity is to be a power of life. God engages, on his part, that it may be, and calls the Christian parent to promise, on his part, that it shall be. Thus the church has a constitutive element from the family in it still, as it had in the days of Abraham. The church life -- that is, the Holy Spirit -- collects families into a common organism, and then, by sanctifying the laws of organic unity in families, extends its quickening power to the generation following, so as to include the future, and make it one with

1. Ibid., p. 111.

2. Ibid., p. 61.

> the past. And so the church, in all ages, becomes a body under Christ the head, as the race is a body under Adam the head -- a living body, quickened by him who hath life in himself, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.[1]

This unity is basically a moral-spiritual rather than a natural-physical unity, and all the more real therefore.[2]

Religious Experience is Coextensive With All Life-Experience

The incompleteness of the church without the forms of the world. Religious experience is the moral and spiritual dimension of general life-experience, in Bushnell's understanding of it. Through the range of such experience supernatural realities are known within the forms of nature. By the very nature of forms, no one such form can provide full access to those spiritual realities.[3] The embodied process of a supernatural salvation, therefore, can never be confined to any one formal institution -- church, family, school or state.

The same may be said for Finney's views, although for him the process is not intrinsically connected with any of them, including the church. Conversion, the church's main concern, is located outside its own confines for the most part. Sanctification is thought of as an internal operation within the church to a much higher de-

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1. Ibid., p. 114 (Italics mine).
2. Ibid., pp. 92 f.
3. Supra, pp. 123-127.

gree. But even this may be accomplished in voluntary united front associations with the world just as well as it is within the church, if not better. The basic location of conversion outside the church and sanctification inside it is frequently implied as an attitude which can be read between the lines of Finney's statements addressed to other specific matters:

> It is entirely below the high aims which a minister of the gospel ought to have, to go out among the cold churches and impenitent sinners, and give himself up to influencing the votes of men in respect of a particular candidate or election. This seems to me to be a turning aside from the proper work of the ministry, and it must and will be felt to be so by a thinking community . . . .
> .....
> My motto is, Let ministers preach on politics and on any and every thing else as circumstances may demand, never however forgetting at any time to make the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of the church the great end at which they aim.. . . .[1]

The futility of the forms of the world without the church. In Bushnell's contrasting view the church in this life -- even in the ideal -- can never be thought of as a community in which the possession of a new heart by all of the members who belong there distinguishes the church from the rest of the communities of the world. In the community of the church no less than in the others, salvation is in continual process, never completed in

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1. Finney to Brother Cowles, The Oberlin Evangelist, VII, No. 20 (1845), 155, (Italics mine.)

this life. When the process is based upon the intrinsic resources of any one of these organic communities alone it is stultified or reversed. In the others, it is positively reversed without the church. In the church without the others it persists but is stultified.

If, on the other hand, the church avails itself fully of its <u>own</u> intrinsic resources and nature and exercises a faithful stewardship of these resources, access to the family, the state, and the school is not denied to the church. They, in turn, are not left to their own resources nor to the guidance of an unregenerative will. The church's intrinsic nature includes its organic access to those other bodies. Inevitably the church will penetrate them, and they will themselves become communities within which the process of salvation is no longer reversed nor dormant but effectively at work.

The Church Spirit Permeates All Other Organic Forms.

<u>A power more than influence</u>. The penetration of the forms of the world by the church's will does not happen merely by influence. It takes place primarily through the deep organic interrelation of the wills of all persons who are within an organic community. The church has a direct access to the organic family unit through the internal ties natural to the fam-

ily because the family is the natural basic unit of the church as well as of society.[1] Through the family the church thus has internal access to the rest of the organic communities of men which also depend upon the family's natural status as the basic social unit.

To the extent that this organic interpenetration occurs the family, the school, and the state are all transformed by the "gift of a new imagination" to the corporate will of each such body through the sharing of its will in the will or Spirit of the church, which is Christ.[2] Each to that extent takes on the prime identifying characteristic of the church itself: guidance by the redemptive will of Christ.

The common will is what distinguishes one organic body from another. These are therefore no longer different organic bodies any more except in a vocational or functional sense, for all of them are possessed of one common will. Such is the spiritual basis of Bushnell's church-state. Even this name for it finally breaks down, for it is not ultimately confined within any national limits, in its end stage of evolution, but is co-extensive with the whole race as the nation of God.

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1. Munger, Bushnell, p. 77.
2. Supra, pp. 146 ff.

Bushnell does not want to identify even this final realization of the true church on earth with the Kingdom of God because there is still sin within it to be overcome.[1] In history it always remains the community within which salvation is yet in process -- never fully completed, and never absolutely assured of completion except in the assurance of faith. Spiritual certainties always involve freedom rather than the determinisms of natural causality. Future generations have been potentially, but really, incorporated into the church.[2] Each new generation -- as those of the present and the past -- begins with a legacy of original sin which is overcome only in a process which must continue throughout a lifetime.

A distinction within unity. Even within the ideal of the church-state, the functional institution of the church retains a necessary identity distinguished from the rest. The spirit of the church still requires a distinctive institutional anchorage. We have seen above how Bushnell pictured the "temples" and smaller "synagogues" which might characterize this institutional side with a special religious vocation. It remains to point out the two prime functions about which these groups are to be oriented,

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1. Bushnell, Building Eras in Religion, p. 31.
2. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 103.

and the reason why these functions must still be institutionalized in such a fashion in even that theonomous situation.

Christian nurture. One of these primary functions is no longer distinctive to the institution of the "church-within-the church" -- if so we may call it. This is the provision of Christian nurture. Even though that nurture takes place everywhere throughout the church-state, however, it is necessary that any such good objective become institutionalized in ever new forms if it is not to become lost with the passage of time. While this form-creation is not the special business of any one person or group, it must be made the explicit responsibility of some defined institution and leadership to see that the responsibility of the whole body is carried out and to provide special services to that end.[1]

Worship. In like manner, an institution is necessary to the continued provision for one of the first functions of the primitive church: the regular public worship and praise of God.[2] This function remains distinctively that of the institutions of the church-within-the church:

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1. See Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 125 f.
2. Ibid., pp. 137 f.

> There must be a punctual and regular attendance somehow established and made obligatory; for the habit of worship is necessary, to its value, as a power over character.[1]

Specific planning is necessary, not only to provide houses for this worship but also to devise definite forms for the worship services:

> . . . for, whether a liturgy is used or not, no organic action can be maintained without forms of some kind, to serve as laws of concert and rules of order.[2]

The provision for adequate and meaningful worship itself requires the provision in addition of specific occasions of preaching, close fellowship and instruction. This the smaller "synagogues" will continue always to supply. Thus they share the koinonial motif of our third ideal-type quite as much as do the vast "temples" to which Bushnell applies that name. But they include the preaching of the Word as well. Christian music must be created and the children trained in it "so that all may bear their part in the worship, and the worship exercise and inspire a devout feeling in all."[3]

Preaching must be provided which will instruct the mind and open new understanding rather than resting content with the "telling, over and over, of old news, announcing again facts that have been known to every reader of the New Testament from his childhood up,

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1. Ibid., pp. 138 f.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., (Italics mine).

as familiarly as his right hand . . ."[1] Yet amid this instructional emphasis the basic importance of the Word of God to such preaching is still discernable, relating it to our first ideal-type. The point is clearly intended in the context to be taken also as an immediate standard for the present actuality of the churches to meet the urgent needs of their members as Bushnell sees those needs:

> They must love a ministry of doctrine, or intellectual teaching. Neither is it doctrine, as many fancy, when they complain of a want of doctrinal preaching, to get a few stale dogmas impounded in the head, or stuck in the brain, as dead flies in ointment; all the rich treasures of thought, and high motive, and solemn contemplation, garnered up in God's word, must be brought out, seen, understood, and fall upon the soul, as manna from the skies. Like manna, too, it must be the supply of to-day only. A new shower must be gathered for to-morrow, and the mind of the people must be kept in active and progressive motion.
>
> Such a kind of preaching will feed the intelligence of the hearers, and raise up pillars in the churches. And here is the great distinction between the preaching proper to the scene of the Pentecost, and that of an established congregation. It is the difference between Peter, giving news to the pilgrims, and Paul offering some "things hard to be understood," to churches of organized disciples. Such preaching is required, in an established congregation, as will exert an educating power. And yet it will, in that way, be a converting power, as efficacious as any other, if only it is expected to be.[2]

From this last note of the educating power of preaching Washington Gladden's idea of the church took

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1. Ibid., p. 131.

2. Ibid., pp. 132 f.

its fundamental clue. Gladden placed his whole reliance in the assumption that preaching plus extrapolations from that basic method will provide an educating power which is necessarily a converting power. But his preaching message was not quite the same as Bushnell's: the conversion required was not very radical anymore. He might well have pondered more seriously Bushnell's criticism of the "many who assume the radical goodness of human nature . . . the work of Christian education is, in their view, only to educate or educe the good that is in us. . ."[1] Bushnell might well have pondered it a bit more seriously himself.

Such was not the education which Bushnell claimed to be the basis of the Christian nurture out of which his organic idea of the church was drawn. Christian nurture depended upon and centered in the existence of the church as an organic community under the corporate headship of Christ. Gladden's view of the church laid overt claim to that organic unity, but Bushnell's deep organic dimension was lost with the loss of what understanding Bushnell had of the depth of corporate sin in human nature. Gladden's idea of the church thus took on strong affinities with that of Finney, who never had an organic view to lose.

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1. Ibid., p. 22.

A Portrait of Bushnell's Idea of the Church

We may now attempt to summarize Bushnell's new idea of the church and its relation to his new view of the process of salvation and to our three ideal-types of the nature of the church.

Nature and Supernature in Christian Nurture

Religious experience of the super-natural. The process of salvation, viewed as Christian nurture, preserves a recognition of the importance of crisis and discontinuity, but within a framework of the fundamental continuity of faith. The continuity is provided through both voluntary and involuntary religious experience. Bushnell's work thus represents, on one side, a vigorous new defense of the importance and tenability of an experience-centered supernaturalism not wholly unlike that of Jonathan Edwards. He did not wish to discard the contribution of tides of awakened feeling to the total rhythm of the redemptive process in his protest against confining the process to such moments:

> Let us turn now, not away from revivals of religion, certainly not away from the conviction that God will bring upon the churches tides of spiritual exercise, and vary his divine culture by times and seasons suited to their advancement . . .[1]

1. Ibid., p. 61.

Continuity. Continuity and the power of original sin makes the supernatural ground of salvation the crucial basis of its possibility. Unlike Edwards, Bushnell stressed heavily that this supernatural power must be wedded to instruments in nature. Instruments of this sort have been ordained in Creation and remain suitable to this purpose in spite of sin. The process of salvation requires crises of individual decision. But in these occasions, decisive and creative voluntary appropriation is made of the results of past growth. This past provides a basis for the confident and courageous facing of a precarious future which offers the possibility either of transformation to a new level of realized value or of lapse into a reversal. Such voluntary decision is itself the product of a faith, which matures through a steady growth of character. It is fed through internal ties with those whose faith is more mature in a community which enjoys a natural organic unity. Nurture is only possible, however, because Christ has become the new pattern of the imagination to which the controlling joint will of this community answers. This organic "body of Christ" is the church, and upon that church the process of salvation depends.

The sacraments and the organic unity of the body of Christ. The organic stress which is so pronounced in Bushnell's idea of the church is most obviously illuminated by our second ideal-type. Bushnell insists upon a real organic unity as a corporate entity -- based upon the sacramental unity of grace with the natural order through the Incarnation. This unity is an indispensable feature of the process of salvation. It is furthermore explicitly stated to be a constitutive element in the nature of the church.[1]

The form of the church is to be regarded as a constitutive factor only by its necessary presence, however. He diverges from our second ideal-type in vigorously asserting that no specific form is constitutive of the church. For no one form or set of forms is always an efficacious vehicle of a given spiritual reality. Thus he rejects emphatically the understanding of the sacraments which falls most appropriately under our second ideal-type. This is made pointedly clear in the course of his criticism of the concept of "baptismal regeneration" which he considers to be claimed in the sacramental language of the Roman and Anglican communions:

> I hardly dare attempt to speak of the "sacramental grace," supposed to attend the rite of baptism, under the priestly forms of Christianity;

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1. Supra, p. 269 f.

for I have never been able to give any consistent and dignified meaning to the language, in which it is set forth. That there is a grace attendant, falling on all parties concerned, is quite evident, if they are doing their duty; for no person, whether laic or priest, can do, or intend what is right, without some spiritual benefit. But the child is said to be "regenerate, spiritually united to Christ, a new creature in Christ Jesus," under the official grace of baptism. Then this language, so full of import, is defined, after all, to mean only that the child is in the church, where the grace of God surrounds him -- translated (not internally, but externally) from the sphere of nature into a new sphere, where all the aids of grace, available for his salvation, are furnished. Sometimes it is added that his sins are remitted, though no man is likely to believe he has any sins to remit; or, if the meaning be that the corrupted quality, physiologically inherant in his nature, is washed away, he will show in due time that it is not; and no one, in fact, believes that it is. Then if it be asked, whether the new sphere of grace will assuredly work a gracious character? "no," is the answer. "If the child is not faithful, or hinders the grace, he will lose it" -- that is, he will not stay regenerate . . . . And thus it turns out, after all, as far as I can see, that the grace magnified in the beginning, by words of so high an import, is a thing of no value -- it is nothing. It is, in fact, one of our most decided objections to this scheme of sacramental grace, (paradoxical as it may seem) that, really and truly, there is not enough of import in it to save the meaning of the rite. The grace is words only, and an air of imposture is all that remains, after the words are explained. The rite is fertile only in maintaining a superstition. Practically speaking, it only exalts a prerogative. By a motion of his hand, the priest breaks in, to interrupt and displace all the laws of character in life -- communicating an abrupt, ictic grace, as much wider of all dignity and reason, than any which the new light theology has asserted, as the regenerative power is more subject to a human dispensation.[1]

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 114 f.

The remarks cited above implicitly reject the alternative view of the nature of the sacrament of baptism which most naturally falls under our third ideal-type. This view, in which the church is "to be composed of such as really believe" already, Bushnell also rejects explicitly.[1] He cannot accept the supposition that the rite is not a vehicle of grace at all but a mere symbol of the grace which has already been fully realized in the person being baptized.

Bushnell demands a view in which a real and effective grace is communicated by the act which is undertaken in the sacrament. The form of the sacrament itself should be an aid to the act, and thus to the grace, as well as an expression of it. At the same time it must be fully recognized that mere forms and sacraments are insufficient to the full realization of what is genuinely contained in them.[2]

This is possible, Bushnell believes, only if the sacrament bears an intrinsic relation to the real ground of that Christian nurture through which the process of salvation works in the actual life-history of the individual. Through it the child must be translated into the church life not externally but internally:

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1. Ibid., pp. 81 f.

2. Ibid., pp. 138 f.

> Now the true conception is, that baptism is applied to the child, on the ground of its organic unity with the parents; imparting and pledging a grace to sanctify that unity, and make it good in the field of religion . . . He is taken to be regenerate, not historically speaking, but presumptively, on the ground of his known connection with the parent character, and the divine or church life, which is the life of that character . . . the child is <u>potentially</u> regenerate, being regarded as existing in connection with powers and causes that <u>contain</u> the fact, before and separate from time. For when the fact appears historically, under the law of time, it is not more truly real, in a certain sense, than it was before. And then the grace conferred, being conferred by no casual act, but resting in the established laws of character, in the church and the house, is not lost by unfaithfulness, but remains and lingers still though abused and weakened, to encourage new struggles.[1]

Bushnell's view of the nature of a sacrament, then, -- if, as seems to be the case, baptism may be taken as a typical example -- understands the form of the rite to be constitutive only in the same general sense that form is constitutive of the church itself. There must be a form. It must be one which will indicate the organic unity upon which it is based, and also that trust is to be placed in the supernatural grace which sanctifies that unity and which alone can make it effective in salvation rather than in corruption. Beyond this, the form may be -- and perhaps ought to be -- varied. The form of the sacraments constitutes the church only in this very limited sense.

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 116 f. (Italics Bushnell's).

The centrality of the supernatural will of Christ. Fundamentally, that which constitutes both the sacraments and the church itself is a will or spirit which rules the church and through it the home.[1] It is both a corporate and an individual will, depending upon the vantage point from which it is viewed:

> To a certain extent and for certain purposes, we are individuals, acting each from his own will. Then to a certain extent and for certain other purposes, we are parts or members of a common body, as truly as limbs of a tree. We have an open side in our nature, where a common feeling enters, where we adhere, and through which we are actuated by a common will. There we are many -- here we are one.[2]

In exactly the same way, this will or spirit of the church is man's, in one view, and God's, in another view.[3] Both views of the matter are essential, and in reconciling them man's will is not to be pantheistically confused with God's.

The external forms called up and used by the one same spirit to communicate its reality and its operations will not remain the same throughout time. Such forms will exhibit a continuity in their changes, but the continuity is based upon the continuity of the spirit which informs them. The continuous identity of this spirit will be inwardly apprehended with the aid of the

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1. Ibid., pp. 121 f.
2. Ibid., p. 95.
3. Supra, pp. 143-158.

multiplicity and partial disjunction of the successive external forms used to communicate its reality. Bushnell thus freely admits that "infant baptism is not as definitely mentioned and formally prescribed in the New Testament as we might . . . expect."[1] It is no less valid thereby as a form appropriate to the continued work of the Word in salvation in the immediate post-Biblical era of the church and in our own. The development of an original geist requires institutionalization which necessarily brings in additional forms.[2]

Faith and the Word. In the final analysis, then, it becomes apparent that Bushnell's idea of the church -- for all of its organic and sacramental stress -- is at its center to be understood primarily under our first ideal-type. It remains centered in the will or spirit of Christ as the eternal Word of God to man. The trust of the Christian is realistic only when it is finally placed in the sufficiency of the Word to work a salvation answering his every need. The Word at work is what is meant by the "Spirit of Christ."[3] This trust is called forth by the work of the Word. At the same time that trust is indispensible to that work.

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 125.
2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Supra, p. 154.

Bushnell's idea of the church deviates from this first ideal-type toward the second type in the strength of its insistence that the Word is an incarnate Word. Faith in the Word is not constituted apart from the making of nature a vehicle of grace -- conjoining the work of Creation with that of Redemption. This is done through the organismic constitution of the church itself.

The embodied word as the extension of the incarnation. In essence, the church is the Incarnation, to Bushnell's understanding. It is the organic body of the whole human race, into which Christ has been incorporated as a new will. It is constituted by both its body and its will, in the union of nature and supernature under the rule of God in Christ.

As essentially the body of Christ it is both one and many. It is no more a corporate unity without genuine individuality in its member persons and groups than it is a collection of members without corporate unity. Bushnell felt obliged by the individualistic error of the times to stress the former truth far more than the latter, upon which he is equally explicit. As essentially the will or spirit which rules the body, it is again both corporate and individual. It consists of

both the will of Christ and the will of man. Its life is the process of salvation. That life is both a voluntary and an involuntary process. Its growth is both a human work availing itself of natural instruments and at the same time the Spirit of God -- God-at-work and present in His works.

The fellowship of spirits in the body of Christ. This spirit which animates the church introduces the note of a koinonia. Here there is shared a real and tangible fellowship of love. We have noted that the koinonia is highly stressed in both the "temples" and the "synagogues" marking Bushnell's vision of the coming great church of a people under God:

> There must be a church spirit, and, in order to this, a fraternal spirit in the members, verified by mutual sympathy and aid under the common burdens of life . . .[1]

Here we see that Bushnell's idea of the church emphasizes some of the basic motifs which form our third ideal-type.

Bushnell was even more explicit about the note of koinonia as a central feature of the church than was Finney. It is quite clear, however, that he has a different understanding of the extent of the transformation of inter-personal relations which is actualized within

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 120 f.

the fellowship, of the criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and of the relationship of the fellowship in the church to the Kingdom of God. He actually leaned toward the third ideal-type less than did Finney because Finney concentrated on the koinonial motif more exclusively if not more heavily. For that matter, Bushnell's follower, Washington Gladden, was much more koinonia-centered than was Bushnell, as we shall see. The strong note of koinonia in Bushnell's idea of the church is, for the most part, derivative from other central features. It stems most notably from the necessity of a genuine organic interpenetration of lives in community.

The Manner of Entry Into the Church and the Church's Inclusiveness

The manner of entry. The ideal of Christian nurture indicates the normal manner of entry into the church. It is both by involuntary incorporation into an organic life and will and by voluntary decision and appropriation.

As indicated by Bushnell's concept of baptism, there are in a sense two general stages of membership. The first is undertaken by the member himself in a sense, but only through the will of his parents which functions as his will at this stage. This establishes a real internal unity with the life of the church, however. The

second stage of membership begins with the member's mature affirmation of his unity with the church by his own voluntary (but not totally independent) decision. This is actually done by degrees throughout life.

Church membership actually cannot be divided into discreet stages at all except as a purely analytical device. The second stage is actually present in the first, as seen through the assuring eye of faith. This is the whole justification for infant baptism, to Bushnell. "Joining the church", or "confirmation", after the age of independence is reached is appropriate to this view; but it is not a sacrament, while Baptism is.

Inclusiveness. The manner of entry is thus inclusive in its movement. There is no tendency to keep it exclusive on the basis of requirements of an already actualized moral and spiritual life in the individual candidate such as belongs to our third ideal-type. Yet a real degree of such actualization must be required of the parent. Without that Bushnell, to be consistent, would have to deny entry to the child for the time being for the simple reason that the basis for its internal reality is lacking. We may perhaps suppose that he did act on this basis, though lacking direct documentation of this historical judgment.

For the child of such parents there is another hope of entry, however. He may become internally translated into the church through partial inclusion in a Christian family other than his own or in one of the other organic forms pervaded by the spirit of the church:

> It is a very great mercy ... that the children of a bad or irreligious family are sometimes permitted to be inmates elsewhere; to go into virtuous and Christian families, where a better spirit reigns . . . In this view, a good school is almost the only mercy that can be extended to the hapless sons and daughters of vice. Their good-- most dismal thought! -- is to be delivered from their home; to escape the spirit of hell that encompasses their helpless age, and feel, though it be but a few hours a day, the power of another spirit![1]

By the same token, believers are to beware how much time they allow their own children to spend in an immoral or irreligious home -- but need not fear bringing children infected by such a home life into their own homes.[2]

Members incorporated into the church life are expected to abide by the standards of truth, morality and spirituality which are held up to them by that life and its ruling will. If they do not do so, the minister has authority to reprimand as well as to instruct them in the name of God's law and Word. Of this divine standard, he stands as the official representative in the pulpit.[3] Disciplines must be employed, at times,

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 120 f.

2. Ibid., p. 121.

3. Horace Bushnell, "American Politics", loc. cit.

against error -- sometimes by tolerance and sometimes by stronger measures.[1] Such a pattern may equally well be derived from any one of our three church-motifs.

Exclusion. Exclusion from the fellowship we must consider a truly drastic measure, on Bushnell's grounds. Of such action he does not speak, but he does not explicitly rule it out. Even in the eventuality of a member's exclusion from the immediate company of the congregation by its action or by his own, however, his organic relationship to the community of the church and its tradition can never actually be severed. Its formative influence upon his basic character can never be erased, and this stamp is most crucially determined within the first five years of life. This feature is suggestive of the second church-type's motif of organic continuity and the indelibleness of the stamp of grace. Bushnell, however, seeks to relate it instead to the persistence of faith through human unfaithfulness, as under the first church-type.

The Brokenness and the Mending of the One Church in Jesus Christ

Disunity. The fellowship uniting the primitive church has been disrupted. This is due in part to an inevitable

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 136 f.

process which has a constructive as well as a disuniting role in the development of both the church and the individual:

> . . . as Christ and his evangelists had given the new facts to the world, so it was inevitable that a grand process of thinking or mental elaboration should begin to work out the import or doctrinal interpretation of those facts. In this process, diverse opinions, formulas, sects, controversies, must be developed -- consequently new modes of duty . . . .[1]

The abuse of group by group, however has lead to excessive reactions going far beyond the necessities of defending the truth. This has twisted the characters of the various churches to some extent -- just as Bushnell believes that an artificial change has been worked in the nature of the Jewish race under the abuse which Christendom has heaped upon its members as a group.[2]

Reunity. Bushnell was deeply concerned for the unity of the churches and the extension of the one great church to the whole body of mankind, as we have seen. He joined a group which made an attempt to promote reunion, until he became convinced that the approach which emerged from the group was on the wrong track.[3] Re-unity must be the by-product of an organic process through which the

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1. Ibid., pp. 136.

2. Ibid., p. 98.

3. In 1843 Bushnell joined forces with the Protestant League, which later merged with the Christian Alliance -- a highly anti-Roman movement. When the latter, in turn, merged with the Evangelical Alliance, campaigning for church unity on the basis of an exclusive doctrinal creed drawn on narrow lines, Bushnell withdrew.

common spirit which already activates the churches is clarified and recognized. This must come by the incidental growth of the unity-in-distribution which already exists more than is presently recognized, and cannot be achieved by direct imposition:

> Unity in itself, especially unity conditioned upon a common catechism, is not an object. Neither is it a thing to be compassed by any direct effort. It is an incident, not a principle, or a good by itself. It has its value in the valuable activities it unites, and the conjoining of beneficent powers. The more we seek it, the less we have it. Besides, most of what we call division in the Church of God is only distribution . . . . Unity is a grace broad as the universe, embracing in its ample bosom all right minds that live, and far outreaching the narrow contents of all words and dogmas. [1]

He was not sufficiently aware how much of the distribution is tragic disunity. Nevertheless, the process of reunion is one in which doctrinal issues of truth must not be glossed over irresponsibly:

> Men must think, as well as love, and thought makes inroads on mere relations of feeling. And thus a long process of forming and reforming must go on, till the Christ of the head becomes as catholic as the Christ of the heart. Meantime, all must stand for the truth, and there must be no countenance given to error . . . every church is set in relations of duty that are partly antagonistic. It must take a form required by its new necessities. What to do for the truth, whom to acknowledge, when to resist and when to forbear, how much consequence to attribute to opinions, over what errors to spread the mantle of charity, how to maintain a polemic attitude in the unity of the Spirit -- these are grave questions that are to occupy ministers and churches,

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1. Bushnell, article in The New Englander, (January, 1847), quoted in Munger, Bushnell, pp. 62 f.

> and, in the right exercise of which, they are to justify their Christian name. And on this will depend the power of religion, quite as much as on the duties done to those who are aliens and unbelievers.[1]

The mediation which will achieve a doctrinal and corporate reconciliation, therefore, cannot be based upon the finding of a least common denominator nor upon a simple splitting of the difference; yet neither can it be achieved by a merely formal act of joining bodies which ignores serious unresolved doctrinal issues:

> . . . I have no thought . . . of proposing any composition, or compromise, with the Unitarians. I have no confidence in any organic and combined effort of pacification between us. If we are ever re-united, it will be by a gradual and natural process, working in individual minds. We must think ourselves together, not as fixing our minds on some halfway place, where we may meet, but simply as striving after the divine verities of the gospel, and the unity of the Spirit.[2]

The process of mediation favored by Bushnell rests upon the assumption that the one Spirit of Jesus Christ is still present and active in the corporate wills of Unitarian and orthodox churches alike. It has not been lost by one of the two in the rupture. Upon the Spirit itself rests the confident hope of re-unity, and its real possibility; but this will not be accomplished by the Spirit without individuals seeking to know the will of Christ and to reaffirm in penitance its rule over their own joint and separate wills.

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 136 f.
2. Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 101.

The Church and the Kingdom of God

The ideal church is not yet the Kingdom of God. The nature of the process of salvation as a life-long growth under Christian nurture, and the manner of entry into the church which follows therefrom, makes impossible the identification of the church of history -- even in the ideal -- with the Kingdom of God. This fact may be illuminated by setting Bushnell's idea of the church in relation to our third ideal-type on this point.[1]

A real transformation is expected by Bushnell to be manifested in the inter-personal relations which exist within the church. It is only through the real existence of such a transformation of these relationships that Christian nurture can succeed and faith be propagated. It is never a completed transformation in any living individual, however, for all of its visible reality and effect. The church is "for the partly bad and not for the just made perfect."[2] It is "God's hospital."[3] Or, it is "God's University" -- "a school of love."[4]

The church, in any event, could not be thought of as the Kingdom of God in limited compass. Those within any compass less than the whole human race through-

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1. Cf. the characteristics of type III, as delineated Supra, p. 12 f.

2. Horace Bushnell, "God Organizing in the Church His Eternal Society" in Sermons on Living Subjects (N.Y. 1872), p.304.

3. Ibid., p. 300.

4. Horace Bushnell, Views of Christian Nurture and Subjects Adjacent Thereto (2nd ed.; Hartford, 1848), pp. 169, 122.

out history can never be isolated from deep organic connections with those outside. Those connections communicate both sin and redemption. It would seem furthermore that in Bushnell's concept of salvation, it is difficult to speak of the completion suggested by the notion of the Kingdom without the whole race being included in it as yet.

The ideal church is almost the kingdom of God. Bushnell does think of the church as in a real sense a precursor bearing a distinct relation to the perfect Kingdom. Indeed, it would seem that he must admit that the perfect Kingdom is really present already in the present church in the same fashion as the faith which is to be historically manifested later in time is really present in the life of the infant being baptized, and on the same grounds. If this be admitted by Bushnell, there is in the church a fore-taste of the Kingdom which exercises a transforming power. Through Christian nurture that power generates its own increase. This process in the church will eventually realize the perfect Kingdom itself. The Kingdom will evolve from the church through successive crises of transition, although not by a humanly irreversible natural necessity.[1]

1. Bushnell, Building Eras, p. 31.

The relevance of our third ideal-type to Bushnell's idea of the church at the point of the church's relation to the Kingdom of God obviously cannot be dismissed. His ideas on this subject do not remove him from the sphere which is best illuminated by our first type, however. Under that motif he remains, drawing upon motifs from the second type -- and, to a somewhat more limited extent, from the third type. The latter motifs were co-opted as weapons against the excessive individualism into which the piety of a faith-centered church may fall in such a culture as that of America in the nineteenth century.

A post-script. A speaker at a recent international church gathering made the point that ecclesiologies differ ineluctably as the consequence of being rooted in one of two basic assumptions. That common to the evangelical churches is expressed by the motto: ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia. That common to the "so-called 'catholic' churches" is expressed by the formulation: ubi ecclesia, ibi Christus.[1] There can be no real doubt that the heart of Bushnell's idea of the church still points primarily in the first of these two directions; but, under his organic system of thought, he is forever emphasizing that if the church is defined according to the first assertion, the second is a reliable statement of empirical fact.

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1. Professor-Pastor H. d'Espine of Geneva (Address at meeting of the World Presbyterian Alliance, Princeton, New Jersey, July 27 - August 5, 1954).

CHAPTER VIII

GLADDEN AND PROGRESSIVISM'S VOLUNTARISTIC IDEA OF THE CHURCH

The New Idea of the Church Defers to the Kingdom

Gladden's Attention to the Church

The neglect of the church by the Social Gospel. Washington Gladden is frequently called the father of the Social Gospel, and with justification. The impression is widespread today that the movement known by that name felt little concern for the church along with its passion to Christianize society at large.

There is considerable truth to that judgement, even in Gladden's case, but it is easily overstated. Gladden, like Bushnell, believed that "this is the day of opportunity and responsibility for the Christian church" as well as for the individual Christian. "The hope that is set before" the Christian pastor "is that the Church of God will have a great deal more to do with the life of coming generations than it has ever had to do with the life of past generations, -- not as a political power, but as an informing and inspiring influence."[1]

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor and the Working Church, p. vi.

An indication of the difference between Gladden's hope for the church and Bushnell's is the different meaning which he gave to the words of the last phrase from that given to the same words by Bushnell. To Gladden, informing meant imparting information, and inspiring meant stimulating. Gladden's practical mind seems often to have missed the deeper signification of such typically Bushnellian terms in much this same fashion. But perhaps he did understand them after all, and knowingly adapted them further in the direction begun by Bushnell, without letting the reader in on that secret.

The church in Gladden's writings. At any rate, Gladden was given the opportunity in 1898 to set forth his own concept of the church in one of a series of text-books comprising the new International Theological Library. As a text-book on Pastoral Theology, The Christian Pastor and the Working Church provided Gladden with the ideal setting for a discussion on ecclesiology. He could apologize to the scholars for any lack of full theoretical treatment because it was supposed to be a practical guide-book. What he did not care to go into he could relegate to the province of another book in the series. Anything that he considered really important to the understanding of the church's nature and function he could and did bring in as fully as he pleased. With the aid of this book, therefore, we should be able to undertake a fair description of his idea of the church upon which to base our judgements about it.

The book shows that he had thought about the subject to a far greater extent than the rest of his writings show. It was written at the end of the decade during which Gladden's leadership and influence was at its zenith and his views had been developed and stabilized by this time. It confirms, in the main, the picture of his idea of the church which can be drawn from his other writings, but substantially modifies some important details affecting any overall judgement of the idea. Above all, it fills in the picture with surprisingly direct answers to the questions which we would like to put to the other two men in our stream without having to reconstruct so many of the answers for ourselves. We shall rely upon this book heavily and gratefully in tracing Gladden's idea of the "working church." It is not one of the great, penetrating examinations of the nature and role of the Church of Jesus Christ; but it is still today an inspiring book -- in Gladden's sense of the word.

The New Idea of the Church Defers to the Idea of the Kingdom

Changes in Religious and Social Climate

After the Civil War the great age of revivalism was gone. Finney's "grand absorbing theme" of changing the hearts of sinners was replaced after the 1880's by a less radical kind of changing of hearts in the ministries of the men of The New

Theology.[1] Gladden noted gladly that the "conversion of sinners" is no longer "supposed to be the preacher's main business."[2] Gladden still believed that men needed to be converted, but he did not think that meant such a radical change. Bushnell had won the day to that extent, and nearly everybody in America seemed to Gladden to be already undergoing Christian nurture.

The primary reason for Gladden's statement, however, was the conviction that the preacher now has an even more important business to attend to. Conversion must be a means to that end, even if it is an indispensible means. He would have agreed in substance to the perhaps apocryphal remark attributed to Henry Ward Beecher on refusing Dwight L. Moody's invitation to join him in an evangelistic campaign:

> Mr. Moody and I could not possibly work together in such a mission. He believes that the world is lost, and he is seeking to save from the wreck as many individuals as he can. I believe that this world is to be saved, and I am seeking to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.[3]

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1. This phrase describing the place of revivals in the mind of the period of the Great Revivals is adopted by Cole, Northern Evangelists, ch. iii. It is drawn from a statement in Calvin Colton, History and Character of American Revivals of Religion (2nd ed., London, 1832), p. 59.

2. Gladden, Recollections, p. 58.

3. Quoted in Winthrop S. Hudson, The Great Tradition of the American Churches (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 188.

These men were still conversionists, but the big conversion was to be that of American society. This was not too much to expect with confidence. The Kingdom of God was here, already -- growing with unstoppable power. This was the "grand absorbing theme" of the emerging Social Gospel movement. The moral transformation of society by evolution seemed to be the wave of the future in Christianity.

The Kingdom Instead of the Church as the Locus of the Process of Salvation

Salvation by the Kingdom. Bushnell understood the whole of human society to be the final locus of the comprehensive process of salvation. This was an already realized fact by virtue of the organic unity of mankind; but on that basis alone it was so limited as to be of only potential significance for salvation. It could become effectively true only if the church realized its true nature and resources and grew until it became co-extensive with the race.

In Gladden's understanding, society in general is already the locus of the process of salvation because of the immanence and growth there of the Kingdom of God. True, this does not yet apply to the whole of the world's society; for the Kingdom's growth is tied to the presence of Christianity:

> This kingdom that we find, here on earth, steadily widening its borders and strengthening its dominion; growing as the dawn grows toward the perfect

> day that is not yet; . . . this kingdom is itself a mighty witness of a Power that makes for righteousness, of a God whose name is Love. . . . [Its signs] are visible only in those parts of the world where Jesus Christ is known and loved as Master and Lord. . . . [This kingdom] can be traced as directly to Jesus as the St. Lawrence river can be traced to its source in the mighty inland sea. . . . The words of Christ are the law of this kingdom; the spirit of Christ is the life of this kingdom.[1]

Where these conditions were not yet fulfilled, they would be soon. Gladden's contemporaries had already set out to accomplish the "evangelization of the world in this generation," by which was meant seeing to it that the gospel of Christ was at least heard in every spot on the globe.[2]

The writings of leaders of the New Theology evidence little attention to the church in comparison to that given the theme of social transformation in the Kingdom. Sheer absorption in this theme, as with Finney in his theme, tended to preclude due attention to any aspect of ecclesiology far more than it precluded practical attention to concrete pastoral functions. The same judgement holds true of Gladden's work to a somewhat lessened degree. The fact that he gave some extensive direct attention to ecclesiolgy in the course of one of his many books

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1. Washington Gladden, "Where is the Kingdom of God?" in Gladden, Burning Questions (New York, 1890), pp. 243ff. Quoted in H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (Chicago and New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1937), p. 161.

2. This was the motto of the Student Volunteer Movement.

is significant, but does not wholly balance its lack elsewhere. Gladden seems to be somewhat atypical of the New Theology at this point, as he is at the point of his retention of a social realism and an evangelical dimension to a greater degree than most of his associates in that movement.

The Prophetic protest against the church. Gladden was not merely distracted from concentration on the church by his zeal for social action. He felt a prophetic call to protest against the church's past tendency to be preoccupied with itself. The church is indeed the primary instrument for the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth:

> The separation of classes threatens the disruption of existing society, and the overturn of all our institutions. There appears to be no agency by which this separation can be averted except the Christian church.[1]

The church is not to think thereby that it is indispensible to the Kingdom. The Kingdom will grow without it, if need be -- although in a less desirable way:

> If the church is true to the principles of its Founder we may escape revolution, and go forward with the process of a healthy social evolution. If the church, faithless to its trust, becomes the embodiment of that pride and exclusiveness which its Master came to rebuke and destroy, the church, with the state, will be revolutionized; the ecclesiastical structures now existing will be demolished, and the Kingdom of God will be rebuilt on sure foundations.[2]

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 32.

2. Ibid.

Whether this would be the end of the church or whether a new, true church would emerge from the rubble to be the core of the rebuilt Kingdom, Gladden does not make explicit. He does not need to do so, because he is sure that the warning will be sufficient.

The worst manifestation of this pride and exclusiveness -- class separation in the churches -- is the product of the church's self-idolatry. The law of self-giving in love and sacrifice applies to the church as much as to the individual:[1]

> The first question for any church to ask is, "Who is my neighbor?" That question must be answered in the Christian sense, and the whole regimen of the church's life must be conformed to the answer. If Christianity has a law for society, the church must first of all learn that law and obey it.[2]

The church must not regard itself as the proprietor of the Kingdom of God but as the servant of that which is wider than itself:

> The Kingdom of Heaven is the entire social organism in its ideal perfection; the church is one of the organs, -- the most central and important of them all, -- having much the same relation to Christian society that the brain has to the body. . . . A body without a brain could not be a very effective instrument of the mind; . . .
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> And yet the brain is of use only as it furnishes to all the other organs and parts of the body feeling and motion. . . . The brain is in one sense the master, in another sense the servant of the whole body. . . .

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1. Ibid., p. 255.

2. Ibid., p. 38.

> In the same way is the church related to all the other parts of human society. . . . it lives by what it gives them; it has neither meaning nor justification, except in what it does to vitalize and spiritualize business and politics and art and literature and education and every other interest of society. The moment it draws apart and tries to set up a snug little ecclesiasticism with interests of its own, and a cultus all its own, and standards of its own, and enjoyments of its own, -- the moment it begins to teach men to be religious just for the sake of being religious, -- that moment it becomes dead and accursed; it is worse than useless; it is a bane and a blight to all the society in which it stands.[1]

The church is on trial.[2] It must justify its existance by its usefulness to the good of society. Still, what is good for society is to be judged by Christian standards. Cultural standards had crept into this judgement to a larger degree than Gladden realized. He did not agree with Phillips Brooks that the church was at present as much of a hindrance as a help, but it tended in that direction.[3] It is much too self-absorbed:

> The first error is that of those to whom Christianity is churchism; those who separate the church from the rest of the world, and give their whole time and strength to exalting it, and building it up, caring little or nothing for the other departments of life; not wishing, or at any rate not trying, to establish any vital relations between it and those interests which men call secular. To these persons the church is not a means to an end, but it is an end in itself. The church is not the channel through which the life of God flows into the world; it is the reservoir

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1. Ibid., pp. 43 f.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

3. See Hudson, Great Tradition, p. 165.

> into which the tribute of the world is to flow for the honor of God. Humanity exists for the church, not the church for humanity. The great object is to make men into good churchmen, not to train churchmen to be good men.[1]

The criticism was a fair one as directed against the churches of the Gilded Age, and it still bears its point today. Even the church must never be absolutized by Christians and placed above God's salvation of man. Gladden's protest has its roots in that Protestant conception of the Word-centered church which falls under our first ideal-type. It is a manifestation of "the Protestant principle" of form-destroying and form-creating protest to which Paul Tillich points us.[2] If the Word was no longer understood in quite the same way as in our first church-type, it was still the Word which gave rise to this protest. It came Gladden's way through the new critical scholarship of the Bible and the rediscovery of the centrality of the Kingdom of God to the historical ministry and teachings of Jesus.

The subservience of the church to the Kingdom on principle. On Scriptural grounds, the church must be understood as subservient to the Kingdom itself. To that extent, the church ought to be regarded as instrumental to a higher end. In the last analysis, therefore, the problem reduces to how we con-

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, pp. 44 f.
2. Tillich, Protestant Era.

ceive of the Kingdom and with what we are to allow it to become identified. Gladden identified it with the interests of a reasonably Christian society. Reasonable Christianity is always subject to a high degree of acculturation. This is all the more probable when men define Christianity in essentially ethical terms. Gladden's definition did not change appreciably from that which he gave in 1876 in his little book, Being a Christian and How to Begin. Being a Christian means to follow Christ, which in turn means "to accept as the ruling axiom of ethical conduct the command that a man shall love his neighbor as himself;" and -- as Hudson puts it -- "the way to begin is just to begin."[1]

The seat which Gladden assigned to the church in the social vehicle of the Kingdom of God was the driver's seat. The grounds he gave for this assignment were bound eventually to seem in the eyes of some of the passengers to provide little essential distinction from themselves. In failing to present a higher claim for the church than he did, Gladden was in part merely accepting what was already a broad trend toward the gradual diminution of the effective power of the Protestant churches in American life.

The loss of power by the Protestant churches. Lyman Beecher told of his recollections of the clergy meeting in smoke-

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1. Hudson, Great Tradition, p. 187.

filled rooms to choose governors for the State of Connecticut.[1] That day was over by the time of Beecher's own prime, and the trend continued steadily. By the period of the Civil War the strong direct leadership of the clergy had disappeared almost entirely. So much the better, in Gladden's opinion. Not power but influence should characterize the church in society and the minister in the church:

> The New England ministers at one time had more power than was good for them, and they were only men. There is no better opening for a pope than the Congregational system offers to a strong man in a church composed of weak and ignorant members.[2]

In Gladden's day the clergy still exercised an enormous moral force and opinion-molding power in American society. This he did not wish to see lessened, nor did he expect that it would be -- although he warned that it might be.

It was right that the clergy should yield the spotlight to the laymen of the church in the future, he felt. In Christian history, "a day came when the church was the clergy, and the function of the laity shrank into insignificance." Even the Reformation has not adequately rectified that situation. ". . . the emphasis must now rest, not upon the pastor, but upon the church."[3] Once again, the protest of this pioneer of

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1. Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, I, 259.
2. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 52.
3. Ibid., pp. 4, 10.

the Social Gospel still strikes home. The ordinary Protestant Christian still often identifies the church with the clergy.

For all of his advocacy of sociological realism, Gladden missed an important implication of this very fact: since the identification continued in the American mind, the decline in the importance of the clergy meant in fact a decline in the importance of the church. Gladden optimistically overestimated the rise of lay leadership which he saw coming in the new movement toward the "working church." He was well aware that a significant number of workers and leaders in the rising labor unions were cool toward the churches. He found, however, that the trend was not so wide-spread as many thought, and he was confident that it would be stopped by a mending of the ways of the churches which were responsible for it.

Organism in Transition to Koinonia

The Bushnellian idea of the church underwent another notable change concommitant with Gladden's conception of the church's subsidiary relationship to the Kingdom of God on earth. The Bushnellian church as an organism ultimately embracing the whole of the race in an organic unity became for Gladden the Kingdom of God on earth soon to be made identical with organic human society. The church, to Gladden, was one of the organs of this social body. That organ, in its <u>internal</u> nature, Gladden no longer actually thought of as truly organic in the

Bushnellian sense. He thought of the church most frequently and consistently as a face-to-face fellowship in Christian love. The life of the church centers in the local koinonia within the organic Kingdom of God on earth.

The climate of individualism. A. C. McGiffert credited Horace Bushnell's book, Christian Nurture, with doing more than any other single factor to break down the extreme individualism of the nineteenth century -- which McGiffert mistakenly traced intact to Old Puritanism.[1] There can be no doubt that it had some effectiveness in this direction during the century itself, and even more during the twentieth century. We have seen how Bushnell attacked individualism by arguing for a thoroughly organic conception of the nature of both society and the church. It is highly doubtful that individualism had been broken down very completely by Gladden's day -- nor that it has even now.

Whatever may be true of its general intensity, individualism was not gone by Gladden's day. It had probably never had such extreme advocates as it had at that very time. This was the age of laissez-faire and "classical" economics as the capitalist's robust rationale for his individual prerogatives in the world of industry and finance. Some ministers with New Theology leanings were not averse to preaching the individualistic gospel of wealth.

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1. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas (New York, 1915), p. 277.

Henry Ward Beecher is in some respects typical of the worst social attitudes taken by men within the New Theology. Beecher developed a notorious taste for fancy living, carried rough gems in his pockets, and smugly defended himself against criticism of his endorsement of Pears' Soap with the words: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Soap must be considered a means of grace and a clergyman who recommends moral things -- should be willing to recommend soap."[1] Poverty is generally the result of sin and prosperity is usually an indication of virtue. Beecher's remarks about the railroad workers in the great strike of 1877 show this side at its worst:

> It is said that a dollar a day is not enough for a wife and five or six children. No, not if a man smokes or drinks beer. . . . But is not a dollar a day enough to buy bread with? Water costs nothing; and a man who cannot live on bread is not fit to live. What is the use of a civilization that simply makes men incompetent to live under the conditions which exist?[2]

Marie Antoinette could be excused because of her naivete, and perhaps the much-maligned Beecher can also be partially exonerated on the same grounds. Sympathy for the plight of the laborer was still rare on the part of churchmen at the time. One of the first to rally to their cause, young Washington Gladden himself had much to learn as yet. Probably the most blatant example of this individualistic cultural gospel was the famous

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1. Quoted in Hudson, Great Tradition, p. 178.

2. Ibid., p. 181.

Russell H. (Acres of Diamonds) Conwell, minister of Philadelphia's Baptist Temple, into whose views we need not delve here.

The organic unity of the church as a protest against individualism. Against all this the social conscience of Gladden cried out. He launched a vigorous intellectual attack against the high individualism in whose name it was defended. Gladden was a much more direct disciple of Bushnell than many of the adherents of the New Theology so indebted to that source. Gladden naturally took up Bushnell's polemic in behalf of the organic nature of human society. To Gladden, this view was now established on solid ground by its scientific discovery in sociology, economics and political science:

> The principle which underlies the whole matter is the principle which is revolutionizing modern sociology and economics, -- the conception of society as an organism. If this is true of all society it is even more virtually true of Christian society. If it illustrates the relations of the members of churches to the churches, it illustrates also the relation of groups of Christians to the Christian community [of the whole Church of Jesus Christ].[1]

That the church -- locally and ecumenically -- is an organic unity Gladden stressed again and again, as strongly as he stressed his concept of social solidarism in the same terms. In The Christian Pastor he quotes Patrick Fairbairn to this effect with high approval and criticizes Fairbairn for not following out the full implications of the view:

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 446.

> . . . the flock of Christ are not a mere aggregation of units, but have by divine ordination a corporate existence, with interconnecting relationships, mutual responsibilities, and common interests.[1]

Gladden goes on to affirm the organic nature of the church in his own words and those of Scripture:

> The organizing principle of the Christian church is such a union with Christ, the Head, as brings the members into vital relation with one another. "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members of one another."[2]
>
> The unity of the church of Christ is something more than a voluntary association; it is a vital, an organic unity. [There follows a quotation of I. Cor. 12:13-26 in entirety.] . . . Here is the constitution of the Christian church; and a right understanding of this, and a hearty acceptance of it, are a thousand times more important than all that is involved in our disputes about polities and liturgies and doctrines. The one damning heresy is the rejection of this organic law of the church; . . .[3]
>
> That the church is an organism can scarcely be disputed. Life never exists apart from organization. If the church is alive something closely akin to what we see in a living body must appear in the relation of its parts and members. This is the truth which is put with such marvellous power in Paul's epistles.[4]

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1. Patrick Fairbairn, Pastoral Theology, p. 1. Quoted in Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 6.

2. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 25.

3. Ibid., pp. 33 f.

4. Ibid., pp. 214 f. cf. Gladden, Ruling Ideas, p. 285.

More of the same organic analysis is used in a chapter rejecting revivalism but not all revivals, this time employing extensive quotations from Bushnell's Christian Nurture.[1]

All this can leave little doubt that Gladden spoke of the church in terms of the organic emphasis of our second church-type, and gave it a very high degree of emphasis. Gladden meant every word of it with all his heart and all his strength. He did not mean every word of it with all his mind. Gladden's trouble was not uncommon among the enthusiasts of the New Theology.

The inconsistency of the Bushnellians. These men had agile and keen minds, but their intellectual abilities followed the beckoning of their great visions and sense of mission with too little discrimination at times. In this they mirrored their master, Horace Bushnell. But they were more careless than he was in their use of language. In one context they could mean every word of one idea, while in another context meaning every word of a contradictory idea with no less conviction. One basic trouble was that they did not yet have a truly consistent world-view, in the 1880's, although a great deal more consistency was found by the end of the century.[2] It was Walter Rauschenbush who finally articulated the most

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1. Ibid., chap. xvii, "Revivals and Revivalism."

2. See Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 55, 131. Cf. Hudson, Great Tradition, pp. 161 f., 167 ff., 194.

consistent theological basis which was to be provided for the Social Gospel. The whole liberal line in America, including Rauschenbush, stood in Bushnell's debt, in a real sense. But Rauschenbush's theological roots were not primarily in the Bushnellian tradition proper.

The inconsistency within the carefulness of the New Theology is illustrated by the fact that its common high degree of social consciousness took such antithetical practical directions. The school was indeed highly unitive in its basic assumptions of divine benevolence and human goodness flowing from an immanentism which was referred to the Incarnation. These were not so much "beliefs," as Hudson terms them, but semi-critical assumptions on the basis of which argument about beliefs did not seem very important to these men.[1] Its unity was really a faith rather than a belief, for all its intellectualism. The faith was one which did not encourage a thorough systematization of the various levels of the belief-structure in which it took expression.

The inconsistency with which Gladden used the organic analogy for the church is not demonstrated by the mere fact that he used other analogies with equal or greater frequency. It is shown in the fact that he almost invariably used the organic analogy to express something quite different without ever

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1. Hudson, Great Tradition, pp. 193 f.

being aware that he was doing so. He used Bushnell's theory of language in ruling out Biblical literalism, but he had none of Bushnell's sophistication in his understanding of the whole problem of theological language.[1] In the last analysis, "organic" simply meant to him anything involving real social relationships.

The individual approach to social salvation. The method to be used in effecting Gladden's solidaristic salvation is individual persuasion. Gladden's idea of the church begins with the individual and proceeds from there to affirm that the individual is in society and must do his part there. ". . . no man can be redeemed and saved alone; no community can be reformed and elevated save as the individuals of which it is composed are regenerated."[2]

The methodological primacy of the individual approach appears as an assumption throughout The Christian Pastor, side by side with the consistent denial of the primacy of the mere individual in the nature of the church. In Gladden's understanding, the process of salvation consisted of being informed and inspired by the Master's teaching of the law of life. It is the Word which converts the heart, but the Word as a gospel and the Word as a law are indistinguishable nowadays:

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 86.

2. Gladden, Working People, quoted in Brauer, op. cit. p. 241.

> The old preachers used to make a distinction between preaching the law and preaching the gospel. By the law was meant the penalties of the law; and by the gospel the promises of escape from these penalties. The matter does not shape itself in our minds exactly as it did in theirs, for we have come to see that the spiritual laws are the natural laws; that they are self-enforcing, and that the only way to get their penalties remitted is to stop disobeying them.[1]

Education. The main business of men in fostering the process of salvation is teaching. Upon this all evangelism is principally based:

> The Christian minister is first of all a student. That is, indeed, the primary designation of all followers of Christ. . . .
>
> . . . He is, to begin with, a living illustration of the truth which he teaches. Unless it can be said, with some good measure of veracity, of him as of his Master, "He is the truth," his teaching will not be influential.
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> . . .
>
> There is also that great work of evangelism which is sometimes distinguished from the work of teaching, and there is a sense in which the distinction may be maintained. . . . Men were . . . first to be enlisted and enrolled, and then instructed . . . The greater part of the instruction which men receive follows rather than precedes the date of their discipleship. They become disciples not because they are fully instructed, but because they desire instruction. The preaching which awakens in their minds this desire is what we rightly call evangelistic preaching. And yet there is, in these days, a great deal of teaching in the best evangelistic preaching. It is difficult to separate, in fact, the function of the teacher from that of the evangelist. It is unfortunate for both of them when they are separated. The evangelist

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, pp. 109 f.

> who does not care to teach is apt to become a bad kind of sentimentalist; and the teacher who has no evangelistic fervor is apt to degenerate into a critic or an essayist.
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> The minister . . . is also a leader of men, an organizer and inspirer of spiritual activities. And yet this is all to come as the result of his teaching, -- because the truth which he has imparted to his hearers has awakened in them the desire of service, and has pointed out to them the work that needs to be done.[1]

Sentimentality. Gladden did not want to be a "bad kind" of sentimentalist. The 1890's brought increasing realization that fine sentiments and good intentions were not enough. Sentiment must be based upon knowledge and carried out into action. That did not mean that sentiment was not basic to the whole process, however. It remained the chief source of power for ethical action. Informing the mind and inspiring the sentiments effectively required an intimacy in personal acquaintance and friendship with the individual, and a direct approach to his individual condition.[2]

The church centers in the local congregation. Perhaps it was this more than anything else which accounted for a consistent localism at the center of Gladden's ecumenical idea of the church. His tendency to identify the Church of Jesus Christ with the local congregation stood in a real tension

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1. Ibid., pp. 83 ff.

2. See ibid., chap. vii, "The Pastor as Friend."

with his recognition of the present reality of the ecumenical Church. It stemmed out of a long tradition in Congregationalism which deeply shaped Gladden's thinking about the church; but he was quite ready to discard other traditional conceptions from that source, and even to qualify this one significantly. There must be more than traditional reasons for his continued strong localism.

Frequently Gladden seems to identify the church absolutely with the local congregation:

> The Christian Church and its Pastor form the subject of this study. By the Church is meant the local congregation of Christian believers. To the organization and work of this congregation, under the leadership of its minister, our inquiry will be addressed.[1]

We might suppose that this was merely careless language, and that Gladden only meant to define the topic of The Christian Pastor as the practical administration and role of the local church. A careful reading of the book does not bear out this supposition, however. Again and again, the preference is toward defining the whole idea of the church in terms of the local congregation:

> All Protestant denominations unite in giving to the local congregation of Christian believers -- those who worship in one place, and have an organization under which the sacraments are administered to them by their own officers -- the name of church. By some of these denomin-

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1. Ibid., p. 1.

> ations the word is also used to designate larger organizations, provincial or national; . . . [The former] . . . is the sense in which the word is always used in these pages.[1]

That this is a fundamental constituting principle of the nature of the church is an assumption which runs throughout the book.

The unity of the local churches. On the other hand, this principle is seen to have some grave limitations. The church is, somehow, a unity greater than the sum of the local churches. This must be expressed in some sense of spiritual unity and in tangible acts of co-operation. Characteristically, Gladden's hopes for church-union procede from the local congregation outward. The task of the local church and its pastor is not confined to itself:

> He is indeed the minister of this particular church; but if the church is Christ's church there can be nothing exclusive in its ministry. The church is Christ's representative; and the servant whom it employs is employed to do Christ's work. . . .
> . . . to look out and not in, and to lend a helping hand, is as truly the law of the corporate life of the church as it is the law of the spiritual life of an individual.[2]

This recognition must be, in turn, a recognition that one local congregation among others in a town cannot really be THE Church of Jesus Christ:

> It might, by and by, be evident that here was truly but one church; that the associated con-

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1. Ibid., p. 23.

2. Ibid., pp. 254 f.

> gregations of any town or city really constituted the Church of that town or city; that there could be but one Church of Jesus Christ in any community, and that, in their common loyalty to him, and their constant endeavors to work together with him and for him, the unity of the Church had been realized. It is here, if anywhere, that Christian unity will be achieved.[1]

This means no abandonment of the definition of the church as the local congregation, but rather the recognition that that congregation includes all the Christians in a given locality. It does require restraint in the use of the Congregational principle:

> The independency of the local church is a doctrine which must not be too strongly asserted. Indeed, even those to whom it is a cardinal principle must make haste to declare that it must never be dissociated from that other principle, equally fundamental, of the fellowship of the churches. . . . And this principle of the fellowship of the churches is one to which no denominational limits can be set. It is not merely the churches of the same denomination which are members of one another. . . . all true churches of Jesus Christ, living so near to one another that they can be affected by one another's life, must feel themselves to be one . . .[2]

The principle which stands in the way of unity is -- individualism! Yet even individualism has its value if kept within proper limits:

> The old individualism has done its disintegrating work in ecclesiastical as well as in civil society. It was a necessary reaction against

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1. Ibid., p. 444.

2. Ibid., pp. 446 f.

> the hierarchical despotisms by which not only the local congregation was robbed of the precious right of "home rule," but the individual layman was reduced to cipher, -- the clergy being the only significant figures. But the force of this protest has gone quite far enough. Those local churches which have most completely won their autonomy may well be the first to show how free they are to seek the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace . . .[1]

Gladden goes somewhat farther than Bushnell in his affirmation that individualism was a constructive protest in the past. There is a significant kind of residual individualism in Gladden's own outlook. Individualism has gone too far, but not so very much so after all.

The face-to-face fellowship of Christian love as the real center of the idea of the church. When it comes to the unity of the church beyond a given locality, Gladden affirms it -- but in terms which are weak and vague. Indeed, such references are surprisingly infrequent considering Gladden's zeal for church-unity. We thus come upon a startling fact: Washington Gladden, the great exponent of universal solidarism in the Kingdom of God on earth, was actually unable to conceive of any real human unity except in a face-to-face community of loving personal relations!

Gladden used the organic terminology of our second church-type with greater emphasis than did Bushnell, -- if

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1. Ibid., p. 447.

such a thing be possible. He was quite unable to think extendedly in those terms, however. Whether or not he was aware of the fact, this terminology was nothing but a device for the assertion of the necessity of some kind of real community among persons. All other implications of the analogy were immediately dropped, turning it into a mere, isolated metaphor. Its sole value to Gladden was the inevitable strength with which it asserted inter-personal relatedness, irrespective of the kind of relations.

Every one of the passages asserting the organic nature of the church cited above ends by interpreting that point in terms of our third church-motif's face-to-face koinonia. The scientific discovery of society and the church as an organism is applied in terms of the fellowship among the various churches.[1] The implications which Fairbairn should have drawn from his organic affirmation are the importance of the co-operative labors of pastor and laymen and the crucial place of fellowship meetings in that work.[2] The long, ringing statement of the organic "constitution" of the church concludes with the following words:

> The one damning heresy is the rejection of this organic law of the church; the one intolerable schism is that by which Christ's poor are prac-

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1. Ibid., p. 446. Cf. Supra, pp. 314, 323.

2. Ibid., p. 6. Cf. Supra, pp. 314 f.

> tically cut off from the fellowship of their more prosperous neighbors.
>
> It is true that it is becoming increasingly difficult to realize the fellowship on which the Christian church is founded.[1]

The indisputable fact that the church is an organism means that it has to have organization.[2] On the other hand, the koinonial motif is employed continually throughout The Christian Pastor without referring it to the concept of organism.

Koinonia and social concern. Gladden's idea of the church is continually torn between these two motifs. It is characterized by what we might better term a schizophrenia than a duality. It is not necessarily impossible to reconcile a kind of wholism with a kind of particularism within one consistent idea of the church. Bushnell was able to do so in his own way. Gladden was able to reconcile these two poles within his feelings, but not in his conceptions. He does not seem to have felt that to be very necessary.

The stronger of these two contenders for Gladden's idea of the church proved to be the koinonial motif of our third church-type. The factor which tipped the scales that way was Gladden's basic concern that the church be a social force engaged in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. That task begins in every Christian's own home town or else it is never

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1. Ibid., p. 34. Cf. Supra, p. 315.

2. Supra, p. 315.

begun at all. The church is to be conceived as "the working church . . . a comparatively new thing under the sun."[1] A face-to-face community where persons are bound together in Christian love and mutual helpfulness is the logical focus for a church whose primary purpose is such work. The work itself consists primarily of the overcoming of the separations of class and caste among men. The achievement of a genuine koinonia of love in a local church accomplishes that work itself as well as motivating its participants to engage in the task of reconciliation:

> . . . the ideal Christian church is a "household of faith," the members of which are bound together by personal affection; and . . . it is also a working body whose function is best fulfilled when its members are all actively enlisted in some kind of helpful ministry; and for this mutual fellowship and co-operation the body must not be too large.[2]

Among the various factors involved in determining the proper size for a local church, it is this one which sets the crucial limit. The limit of face-to-face friendship among the members of a church is suggested as ruling out more than one thousand members, with far fewer as the ideal:

> In short, it may be said that the church membership should not be so large but that some good measure of acquaintance and friendship may be maintained among its members, and between its

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

> members and their minister; nor so large but that they may be effectively employed in the work of the church.[1]

The correctness of the judgements which we have drawn above is conclusively demonstrated by one passage in particular, which we may now quote in its revealing entirety:

> The fellowship of the brotherhood is never to be lost sight of. The organizing principle of the Christian church is such a union with Christ, the Head, as brings the members into vital relation with one another. "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members of one another." This surely implies acquaintance and friendship. It is absurd to talk of such relations as these among people who have not even a speaking acquaintance with one another. The church must not be so large as to defeat the very purpose of its organization. And it is equally clear that it must not be so large that no effective use can be made of its forces in Christian work. It will be found that by far the greater proportion of many large churches are merely "honorary members," having no part in the activities of the church.[2]

The most revealing significance of this statement lies not in its truly wise advice about the virtues of a small church, but in its denial that it makes any sense to speak of organic relationships among people who are not personally acquainted. To speak in this way did not seem absurd to Gladden's mentor, Horace Bushnell!

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1. Ibid., pp. 24 f.
2. Ibid., p. 25. [Italics mine.]

The relation of the church to the Kingdom. Recognition of this truth about Gladden's views sheds additional light upon his conception of the church's relation to the Kingdom of God. The two are very closely related in our third ideal-type of the church, to the point of being almost identified. Such also turns out to be the case in Gladden's view. They are not completely identified in our third type for one or both of two reasons. The first is that the Kingdom is perfect and the church is not. If the Kingdom is seen as realized in the actual present church, therefore, it must still be only a partial realization. The second reason which may apply is that, if the church is the Kingdom, the compass of the church must be restricted to those persons who exhibit the highest of earthly ethical qualities. Since more persons than presently can pass that test belong eventually to the Kingdom, the Kingdom itself must be seen as presently smaller than it is ultimately to be. Both of these two reasons describe Gladden's own views.

In the comprehensive sense of the term, the church can almost be taken to mean what it meant to Bushnell -- almost, but not quite: "To a considerable extent it is a question of words, but there are, after all, important distinctions which we must learn to make."[1] These Gladden procedes to make clear by discussing a passage from "one of the most inspiring books

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1. Ibid., p. 38.

of this generation," Dean Fremantle's The World as the Subject of Redemption. The preface to the 1895 edition offers a conception of the church which can scarcely be distinguished in essence from the ideal of the church-state developed by Bushnell and that of the national church of F. D. Maurice. It is attractive to Gladden, but not wholly acceptable as a concept:

> . . . the sacredness of all life, the essential religiousness of every kind of useful work -- is not to be gainsaid; . . . But it is a question whether the word church has not become so thoroughly fixed in its meaning that it cannot be stretched to cover all that Dean Fremantle tries to include under it. Will the old wine-skin hold the new wine? Is it not better to keep the word church for the "communities organized for public worship and its accessories," and to apply to "the whole community of Christian people, in all the range of their life," Christ's own phrase, the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven. It will be necessary, then, to show that it is possible and greatly desirable to widen the scope of the church, and make it touch the life of the people at many more points than it has hitherto done; and it will also be necessary to show that the church, so defined, -- even when so enlarged, -- is subordinate, in all respects, to the Kingdom of God; that it is a part, and not the whole, of that Kingdom.[1]

Not only the popular mind but Gladden's own as well did not admit the rightness of so stretching the idea of the church. The Kingdom of God could be conceived in such far-reaching terms because it was a great noumenal reality for Gladden. It could be genuinely organic in Bushnell's sense because all wonders are possible in Heaven, even though it be Heaven come on earth.

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1. Ibid., pp. 39 f.

There one might have face-to-face relationships among unimaginable numbers of people in a grand community. The same holds true for the "spiritual unity" of the universal Church of Jesus Christ at present: one does not have to be able to conceptualize that relationship so sharply as is necessary in facing the concrete reality of the present churches where they live and work. That great unity may be truly organic. The unity of the particular churches must be a unity in face-to-face fellowship and co-operation.

The ethical purity of the true church. There is yet another reason which Gladden specifies for his reservations about Fremantle's highly Bushnellian idea of the church. This one, to Gladden, is conclusive above all the rest:

> It might be possible, following the suggestion of Dean Fremantle, to include under the term church all the spiritual and ethical interests of the community, and to conceive of charity and education, and even of art, as proper functions of the church; but the function of civil government involves methods and agencies that cannot well be identified with the church in fact or in name. Civil government must employ force, and the weapons of the church are not carnal. The state does not lose its divine character when it employs force; the powers that be are ordained of God, and they bear not the sword in vain, but the work to which the state is called is a different kind of work from that to which the church is appointed, and it is essential to the effectiveness of each that the two functions be separated. The state with its political and retributive functions is an integral part of the Kingdom of God; and the duties to which it summons us are not less sacred than those to which the church calls us, but they are duties of a different nature, and must not be

> confused. So, at least, it seems to those of us who do not live under religious establishments. The Kingdom of God includes both state and church; it is, indeed, "the whole community of people in the whole range of their life"; every part of that life is sacred, but there are some parts of it which are not wisely considered as functions of the church.[1]

Here is Gladden, the prophet of social righteousness who joined with others of the Social Gospel in denouncing the war-system and the armaments race and proclaiming the coming day of peace when such madness would be banished from the minds of thinking and feeling men in society. Here is Gladden, the sociological realist who comprehends the moral necessity of forcible restraint in society, and whose own moral proclamations were not without their references to the penitentiary.[2] Here is the Spencerian social evolutionist who could countenance the eventuality of the coming of the Kingdom by violent revolution as a constructive, if regrettable, possibility. Above all, here is Gladden, who could not allow the necessary vice of coercion into his koinonia of inductively-verifiable supernatural love.

The changing of Bushnell's church into Gladden's Kingdom of God. These motifs from our third church-type in Gladden's idea of the church evolved, in a sense, from his heritage of motifs of the other two types. Gladden's Kingdom of God was

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1. Ibid., p. 40.

2. Supra, p. 168.

now something to be built on earth, here and now. In like manner, he sought a more distinct, particular realization of the organic unity of Christians in the church about which Bushnell spoke. Hence his accent upon the close koinonia of the local fellowship as the key characteristic of the church. He has not gone all the way over to the third type from the second in this feature, however. The koinonia must be close, but never closed in the slightest degree. Its openness goes beyond the missionary character appropriate to the third type. It is still inclusionist after the basic pattern of the second type. The type of its inclusionism also differs more from that of our first church-type than from the second.

In an important sense, Gladden's koinonial stress also evolved from our first ideal-type's motif of the centrality of the preaching of the Word. The spoken word of the preacher was still the key to the constitution of the fellowship, for Gladden. That preaching had become the teaching of the truth of life. It was still more than didactic teaching, however, and a new living interest in Scripture played an indispensible role in it. Jesus' law of life was the embodied principle of love and sacrifice which drew together and cemented the koinonia. This the minister exemplifies in his life; but above all he communicates it in his preaching.

We may see this evolution of the idea of the church reflected in two outstanding features of the idea of "the working church: institutionalism and voluntarism."

Institutionalism and Voluntarism in the Idea of the Church

Instrumentalism and Institutionalism

The general pattern of the "working church" is quite familiar to us today. Its emphasis upon organized activities is certainly one of its most noticeable features. Gladden was not in a theological position to notice the substantial debt of his idea to the highly-organized "activity church" of the Finney revivals. There, too, the laymen of the church were at work in organized and individual ministries to one another, to nominal Christians and to society. These similarities were obscured by the differences in conception of evangelism. They were also hidden from Gladden's view by the extent to which the dazzling light of the evangelistic minister dominated the attention of the outsider. Gladden was not aware that the layman played such an important role in the ministry of the Finney church.

The church as the brain of the Kingdom. Gladden's church is to be the brain of the Kingdom of God. His selection of the brain rather than the heart as a metaphor is significant. The brain, to Gladden, exercises some of the functions which another thinker might assign to the heart: "It must make the eye sensitive to light, the tongue to flavors, the ear to sound, the hands and feet to the volitions of the will which set them in motion."[1] Still, the difference re-

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1. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 81; supra, p. 306.

mains obvious. The last function is perhaps the most significant. The church translates the loving sentiments of the gospel into action for the Kingdom of God.

The specialization of the Kingdom's function in church organization. As Huxley and Milne-Edwards teach us, the increasing specialization of function is a universal law of life. Religion is the whole sensitive, activating nerve-system of the Kingdom of God. As the Kingdom evolves, the nerve-function becomes concentrated and specialized in ganglions and, especially, in the brain. It is all the more pervasive and effective in function throughout the body for this concentration in the brain. Religion, therefore, must always remain specialized in institutions of its own in order to pervade the Kingdom more effectively as it evolves:[1]

> They are not wise who disparage the function of the church, or imagine that we are likely to outgrow it, as we go on toward social perfection. We are just as likely to do without it as we are likely, in our ascent toward intellectual perfection, to dispense with brains, and return to the condition of the oyster, with the nervous system diffused throughout the whole molluscous mass.[2]

The church must be increasingly organized for action.

That Gladden regards this as comparatively new does not bother him in the least, of course. There is nothing whatso-

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1. Gladden, ibid., pp. 42 f.

2. Ibid., p. 45.

ever about the form of the church which is permanently set -- except the law that it must be ever evolving more effectively organized forms. If evolution itself is not sufficient evidence for this, an immanentalist theology will support the assumption:

> We may perhaps assume that the conception which today prevails is the higher and truer conception of the life of the church. Not in the primordial germ, but in the perfected organism, do we seek for the true idea of any Christian institution. Belief in the constant presence of the Holy Spirit, who is guiding the church into all truth, who is taking the things of Christ and making them plain unto us, should assure us that the later phases of ecclesiastical life are higher and more near to the divine purpose than those of primitive days. The church, in its organic life, must leave behind the rudiments and go on toward perfection. We do not, therefore, go back to the Apostolic Church, nor to any of the past ages for our types; . . .[1]

The institutionalization of grace in evolving nature. Evolution's basis in biological science is, we see, another important reason why Gladden cannot really let go of the organic thought of our second church-type and Bushnell's idea. The persistence of this motif is reflected in Gladden's emphasis upon the concretion of grace in forms making use of nature. Beyond that point, however, he deviates from our second church-type far more than did Bushnell. The form of neither the sacraments nor the ministry of the church is permanent to even

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1. Ibid., p. 10.

the very limited degree claimed by Bushnell. There is vigorous protest against any tendency to identify the essence of the church with either its clergy or its sacraments, in any sense. There is less sense of being bound to the past: evolution is not a back-log, it is a residue -- to be surpassed and then sloughed off. The only real value of the motifs of our second church-type, to Gladden's mind, is organizational:

> We may gather from the practice of the hierarchical churches many useful hints respecting the administration of the parish; but we do not consent to their claims for their clergy of superhuman dignity and power.
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> . . . That view of the sacraments which regards them as possessing an inherant and magical efficacy we shall not follow; but we have no controversy respecting the mode of their administration; we wish to know what is their true relation to the faith and the love of those who employ them.[1]

An instrumental view of all church institutions. It was apparently no slip of the tongue for Gladden to refer to the sacraments as something for men to employ to a purpose. Everything in the "working church" is to be regarded as instrumental to its work. Despite Gladden's views on priestly authority and power, he recommends that whatever authority the minister's communion claims for him be used to the fullest extent in advancing the work of the Kingdom:

> Still, if it be true that the minister possesses any mediatorial function, even in the slightest,

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1. Ibid., p. 2.

> he ought to exercise it to the fullest extent. If his office empower him to bless his parishioners, or to forgive their sins, or to offer sacrifices for them, let him discharge, with all fidelity, the duties of his office. If his office confer upon him no such exclusive power, it is better not to go through the forms of it, no matter how much the people crave it, nor how many of them may go over to the hierarchical communions in search of it. An assumption, whether open or covert, of powers that do not belong to him will not be found, in the long run, to promote the influence of any pastor.[1]

The essential consideration is what promotes the influence of the minister as an effective leader of the work of the Kingdom. Even sacerdotal authority, which is wrong, must not be seen as "inconsistent with devoted and heroic Christian service. The whole history of the Christian Church contradicts such an assumption."[2] Gladden is so broad-minded in his idea of the church that one can find almost anything in it at some level. The different levels do not always hang together, however.

Instrumentalism and the reformability of the church. One of the primary aspects in which his idea of the church does hang together consistently is the prominence of the koinonial motif. It must be clearly understood, however, that this is always a working fellowship, and that it is therefore internally specialized and organized around that controlling vocation.

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1. Ibid., p. 57.
2. Ibid., p. 58.

The intrinsic reformability of all church-tradition is an indispensible assumption underlying the total control over the idea of the church exercised by this vocation and under such an instrumental view of the church.

The church of our third type is not sufficiently concerned with institutionalization to illuminate the stress Gladden gives to reformability. The church of our second ideal-type is not radically enough reformable for Gladden's purposes. Only our first ideal-type provides an adequate basis for this idea. Secondarily, however, the natural law of our second type fortifies this reformability for Gladden, as for Bushnell, through man's control over nature. This is all the more true in Gladden's case because of the even higher importance given to evolution in nature.

The role and authority of the minister. These themes are carried out in certain aspects of Gladden's conception of the function and authority of the minister:

> . . . it is a large part of the pastor's business to find work for the members of his church, and to secure their general and hearty co-operation with himself in teaching and shepherding and saving men and women and children . . .[1]

When the New England minister became too officious he used sometimes to be called a "priest" as a term of derision; and rightly so:

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1. Ibid., p. 5.

> . . . the sacerdotal assumptions of these pastors were openly at war with their own theory of the ministry. By that theory the minister is the servant of his people; from them his office is derived; he has no spiritual rights and powers that are not shared by the humblest member of his flock. Whatever of clerical authority or extra-human agency the word "priest" connotes is foreign to that conception of the ministry upon which the New England churches were founded.[1]

Nevertheless, there are proper distinctions of function, and certain kinds of authority which go along with these:

> The name by which the New England minister wished to be known, the official title by which he has always been known, is, perhaps, the best name of all, -- the Pastor.[2]

The primary weight of the title, of course, indicates that he is to feed the church. Nurture, however, comes primarily through teaching, in Gladden's mind. He immediately sets that function in relation to its real purpose -- the development of an intimate <u>koinonia</u> in the church:

> This is the name by which our Lord loved to describe himself. "I am the Good Shepherd," he said; and in the new version we find a statement about his relation to the flock which startles us by its boldness: "I am the Good Shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The intimacy between Christ and his people, on the one hand, is the same kind of intimacy as that between Christ and the Father, on the other.
> . . .
> "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 52.

2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 51.

> follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." . . . The Master's words suggest a close and sacred friendship between the shepherd and his flock. He calls them, and they know his voice. His relation to them is not merely that of teacher with pupil nor of master with servant, but of friend with friend. A large part of his work among them is to be wrought through familiar association and personal influence. His chief function is that of teacher; but their love for him becomes the solvent and the medium of the truth which he imparts.[1]

The minister is truly a priest in one sense, as is every believer. His ministry, as theirs, is one of mediation:

> . . . he has a work of reconciliation to do; he is called to reconcile men to themselves, and to one another, and to God. . . . Here, now, is a work of mediation in which men can help one another. . . . But this is no official function; it is wrought by influences which are purely spiritual; it is the love of God, shed abroad in the good man's heart, incarnated in his life, which gives him the power to do this work.
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> The one thing that the people knew about [our Master] . . . was that he did not speak officially; there was no ecclesiasticism behind him to give weight to his words, and yet there was an authority in them which they had never felt before. His ministry, in all its phases, derived its efficacy, not from the law of a carnal commandment, but from the power of an endless life. And the ministry of every true pastor will draw its power from the same source.[2]

The authority of the Bible. It is not the carnal law of the Old Testament or any officialdom which is authoritative,

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1. Ibid., p. 51 f.

2. Ibid., pp. 60 f.

but Christianity as the new spiritual law of love. This, the minister conveys to his congregation through preaching as the central teaching-occasion. "If he is not to them the mouth-piece of the Divine Wisdom, he is not the man they want for their pastor . . ."[1] The primacy of preaching belongs to the lineage of our first church-type. Even the content of the teaching so managed is still crucially dependent upon the Word divinely revealed in the Bible: "That this book, above all others, will be the subject of his study, needs scarcely to be urged upon these pages. Anthropology does not depend upon it, but Soteriology does."[2]

The instrumentality of authority to the work of the church. Yet even teaching is finally only instrumental to the really basic function of the minister: effective leadership of the fellowship in the work of the Kingdom.[3]

> . . . as a learning church needs a teacher, and a feeding church needs a pastor, so a working church needs a leader. It is not as a lord over God's heritage, but as a wise organizer and guide of the working body that the pastor is appointed to rule the church.[4]

The government of the church must be a democracy because democratic government is the most effective kind:

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1. Ibid., p. 70.
2. Ibid., p. 95.
3. See ibid., p. 84 f., cited, supra, pp. 319 f.
4. Ibid., p. 62.

> A familiar maxim declares that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." The accuracy of this proposition may be challenged. "Just powers" are not the creation of majorities. But this much is true -- that governments derive their effective powers from the consent of the governed. Even the despotisms reign by consent of their subjects. And it can be no otherwise with the pastoral authority. It is only effective when it is "broad based upon the people's will."[1]

The minister's leadership is to be democratic, but it is to be a strong and authoritative leadership none the less:

> . . . "Obey them that have rule over you, and submit to them . . ." . . . But this does not necessarily imply anything more than that wholesome subordination which is the condition of all concerted action. . . . The members of any association owe to the officers, whom they have chosen to take the direction of their affairs, respect and co-operation. . . . ". . . But he that is greatest among you shall be called your servant." This seems to point to a genuine democracy as the social foundation of the church. But democracy is not anarchy; it implies order and subordination and leadership. And most of the New Testament passages which refer to the government of the church "agree in connoting primarily the idea of presidency or leadership." . . . That the church must be to this extent an orderly association; that those who are called to the leadership should be loyally followed by those who call them; that their administration should be firm and consistent and fearless, and that the spirit and traditions of the organization should conspire to maintain this order, -- such is the logic of all human co-operation. The pastor of a working church is the leader, and he should take the lead, and steadily maintain it. The initiative belongs to him, and the support of the church is due to him. . . . If his authority is delegated, still it is delegated authority, and as such ought to be respected.[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 64.

2. Ibid., pp. 61 ff.

Rational legal authority. The pastor's authority now contains important traces of Weber's "fundamental categories of rational legal authority," although some of the important ones are missing. In the first place, there is "a continuous organization of official functions," but it is only somewhat "bound by rules."

Secondly, there is "a specified sphere of competence." It involves "a sphere of obligations to perform functions which has been marked off as part of a systematic division of labor." The sphere also seems to include "the provision of the incumbent with the necessary authority to carry out these functions." Some question about that point is raised, however, by the lack in fact and in temperament of Weber's third feature of this specified sphere: "the necessary means of compulsion are clearly defined." Gladden relies always upon persistent persuasion. To some extent this actually amounts to a degree of compulsion, but it is never backed by sanctions such as exclusion as in Finney's idea of the church. What compulsion Gladden does recognize is "subject to definite conditions," however.

Thirdly, the necessary degree of subordination in church government and work does mean to some extent that "the organization of offices follows the principle of hierarchy." Gladden could not allow himself to recognize it under that term, however. Fourth, there can be no doubt but that in Gladden's

view "the rules which regulate the conduct of an office may be technical rules or norms."

Weber's theory of authority is a sociological theory and somewhat limited thereby in its applicability to church-authority. His fifth category states: "It is a matter of principle that the members of the administrative staff should be completely separated from ownership of the means of production or administration . . ." There is nevertheless clearly a legitimate analogical sense in which this is quite descriptive of Gladden's idea of the ministry if by "production" we understand either the grace in the church or its work in building the Kingdom on earth. Indeed, the church itself is not the proprietor of either one.

Sixth, with the office of Pastor, it is clear that "there is . . . a complete absence of appropriation of his official position by the incumbent . . ." This is verified by Gladden in stating that the call to the pastorate of a church is not valid until an "external call" from the church to be served is added to his own "inward call."[1] Finally, formal "administrative acts, decisions, and rules are formulated and recorded in writing . . ." -- but there are also many of

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1. Ibid., pp. 68 f.

importance which are made informally and not so recorded or formulated except mentally.[1]

Imputation of the authority of Christ to the minister. Despite the importance of effective rational organization to the working church, it is still first of all a Koinonia of loving friends. Its cement is a love whose source is divine. The minister's authority stems partly from his knowledge of sociology and his empirical observation of human nature.[2] It is also delegated by his people. Still, it must have a higher claim than this, although it is a claim shared by his people: "In some important sense he must derive his authority and power from the Head of the church. . . . It may help us . . . if we remember that every man is called of God to holy and Christly service."[3] Even this, however, is in a sense a rational legal authority, to Gladden:

> Jesus taught with authority, and not as the scribes, because he adhered closely to the facts

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1. The above quotations from Weber cover all of the principal points of his definition of this type of authority as found in: Max Weber, Theory, pp. 330-332. The breadth of our topic will not permit us a full discussion of this and alternative theories of authority as applicable to the church. In Gladden's case the full description of this one Weberian type is appropriate because of its striking applicability to Gladden's theory of the ministry. Its use should not be taken to mean that other categories are not equally essential to an understanding of his theory.

2. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, pp. 93, 95, 101.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

> of nature and of human nature. . . . It is not for any of us to know as perfectly as he knew what was in man, but it is possible for all of us to follow his method.[1]

Personal charismatic authority. This passage, of course, does not do full justice to Gladden's understanding of the authority of Jesus, of the Bible and of the ministry's authority stemming from that source. The whole koinonial quality inclines the authority of both Christ and his ministers toward the side of personal charisma. The emphasis in Gladden's culture upon personal friendship in this koinonia led to some distinctly pseudo-charismatic variations on that theme, as we have seen.

One thing which kept this charisma from degenerating any farther than it did in Gladden's case was the continued centrality of the pulpit:

> . . . the first and highest function of the Christian minister is that of preacher.
>
> The minister's throne is his pulpit; when he abdicates that, to become an organizer of charities, or a purveyor of amusements, or a gossip in parlors and street-cars, the clerical profession will cease to hold the place which belongs to it in the respect of men. A great many kinds of work are now expected of the minister, and some of them are of great importance; but a minister makes a great mistake who permits his pulpit work to take a secondary place.[2]

The Word-centered ministry of our first ideal-type is still there in Gladden's church. We must remember, however, that in

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1. Ibid., p. 94.

2. Ibid., p. 107.

Gladden's enthusiastic mind there is room for quite a few "first" and "highest" functions and principles. Preaching yields to nothing else in the minister's order of attention precisely because it is the chief instrument for achieving the fellowship and co-operation which it is the church's work to produce, and which produces the church's work. Preaching must service the working organization. Hence, Gladden is in favor of attention to casuistry in the pulpit, although wary of making it too specified or detailed. Preaching must be full of useful practical wisdom as well as inspiration.

Instrumentalism and Voluntarism

Supernaturalism and moralism. Gladden's idea of the church still had enough of a supernatural center to prevent it from becoming simply instrumental to social values. That to which it was instrumentally subordinate was the Kingdom of God itself. In time, however, the church could easily come to be regarded as instrumental to whatever socio-moral goals seemed good to men, since Gladden explained the Kingdom almost exclusively in terms of such goals. In the minds of his successors, what supernaturalism there was left in Gladden's idea of the church would be open to constant threat of loss.

The treasurership of moral maxims such as the golden rule is not a sufficient basis for the church's claim to a distinctive loyalty on the part of men interested in serving

society. To Gladden, Christ's law of life is divinely revealed. If it is also inductively verifiable by natural observation, however, it is not clear that revelation cannot be dispensed with altogether. Scientific institutions might then serve better than the church as the brain of the "Kingdom of Good." The church's distraction by other matters would even tend to make it come out second-best in efficiency-rating as a social agency.

That these possibilities are more than idle speculation we are well aware today. The competition of interests of a highly-organized and pluralistic industrial society was already apparent in Gladden's day, and it did not escape his notice.[1] In such a context the working church must actively and vigorously compete for the time and interest of men. Inevitably this meant a continual resort to persuasive appeals to individual men to join and work in the church. The constitution of the church was much more voluntaristic than Gladden was ready to admit to himself.

Voluntarism and the unity of the church in love. As a matter of fact, Gladden admitted a great deal more of the voluntaristic character of the church than at first seems apparent. He nowhere denies that the church is rightly regarded as a voluntary association. What he says is that "the unity of the church of Christ is something more than a voluntary asso-

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1. Ibid., p. 34.

ciation."[1] The additional unity comes from the ties of personal acquaintance and friendship between members in a fellowship infused by supernatural love. This binds the members more closely than those of any secular fraternity:

> Various social organizations exist at the present day, some open, others secret, whose members are bound together by vows of fellowship and fraternity. But none of these contemplates a closer fellowship, a more hearty fraternity than Christ designed to be the bond of union among members of his church. This view of the relationship of church members may seem to some extravagent and visionary. Be this as it may, it is the view which Christ and all his apostles held and enforced by precept and by practice; it is the only view to which any countenance is given in the New Testament.[2]

Although supernaturally empowered, the vows of fellowship given by the members constitute the church's unity quite as much as such vows constitute that of a secret society.

Salvation is the ultimate source of this uniting power. Salvation is the uniting of men in a unity which breaks through the isolating barriers of class and caste without destroying that diversity.[3] "The distinctive quality of the saved is their power of saving the society in which they live. They are the salt of the earth."[4] This power is what is meant by sacrificial love:

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1. Ibid., p. 33. [Italics mine.]
2. Ibid., p. 272.
3. Ibid., p. 35.
4. Ibid., p. 103.

> Love is the essence of Christianity. Not love for those nearest us, for our family, or our social circle, but love for all who are made in God's image. . . . And this love must be something more than a vapory sentiment; it must be a practical power issuing from my life and reaching his life. . . . If the cherishing of loving sentiments had been all that was necessary, [the Master] . . . might have remained on his throne among the angels; he needed not to take on the form of a servant. To love our neighbor as Christ loved us, means more than to feel kindly toward him; it means that we should take pains and make sacrifices to do him good. . . . in order that we may be fully exercised in loving our neighbors, the Christian church has been organized.[1]

Christ need not have come to earth to suffer and die that we might have kindly sentiments. These sentiments good human nature possesses intrinsically. Through the living truth taught by Christ's example our natural kindliness must be inspired to sacrificial action.

That is why there is a church. How is this to be done in the church? What is the process of this salvation? The church is to communicate Christ's truth as he did -- by precept and example. In this way it is to show men what needs to be done, and to secure their voluntary committment to the task.

Voluntarism in the conception of preaching. For this the pulpit alone can be the central tool. The working church is a church of our first ideal-type, whose community is constituted through the preaching of the Word. In a real sense it is still constituted by the Word which is preached. The

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1. Ibid., p. 274 f.

competitive drive for committment to action is so strong, however, that the free volitional response of the individual hearer receives the great weight of emphasis.

Voluntarism in the conception of the Lord's supper. This is reflected also in Gladden's conception of the meaning of the Lord's Supper. As one of the only two sacraments of the Protestant churches, the Supper is a serious occasion -- so serious that it should not become inconsequential through too frequent observance! Once a month seems too often to Gladden; once a year perhaps too seldom. Preparation for the Supper should be thorough, including prayer and meditation. The Reformed custom of a preparatory sermon or address is of great value. The theme of the address should be an exposition of the central meaning of the sacrament itself. What that meaning is, Gladden tells us in these words:

> . . . the Lord's gift of himself for us, -- the revelation of his saving love in his great sacrifice. His identification of himself with men in his life and death, and our salvation through our voluntary identification of ourselves with him.[1]

In this communion address it is also appropriate that a few words be said about the work of the church for the sake of which this voluntary identification of the self with Christ has been made. Everything about the sacrament is a voluntary act.

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1. Ibid., pp. 164 f.

The choice of the form of administration is an aesthetic matter and is up to the particular church and pastor: "The form of the sacrament is evidently not essential; each of these methods has a fitness and beauty of its own which endears it to those who have become accustomed to it."[1] Gladden favors invitation to the Table of all who seek to follow Christ. ". . . it may be wisest to throw upon the communicant himself the entire responsibility of receiving or refusing the Supper."[2] Words such as "damnation," "condemnation," "unworthiness" and the like should be carefully avoided.

Voluntarism in the conception of infant baptism. The function of any sacrament is to impress a truth upon the mind and to stimulate action thereby, and nothing more:

> . . . sacraments themselves are not supposed . . . to possess any intrinsic or magical efficacy. They are not opera operata; they are symbols of spiritual facts and relations, -- beautiful symbols which may greatly aid in impressing upon our minds these spiritual facts and in leading us to enter joyfully into these spiritual relations.[3]

Thus Gladden uses Bushnell's concept of Christian nurture to reject revivalism's conception of the church's mode of propagation, but himself explicitly rejects Bushnell's concept of infant baptism. Infant baptism is acceptable to Gladden be-

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1. Ibid., p. 166.
2. Ibid., p. 167 f.
3. Ibid., p. 157.

cause it is merely the declaration of an obvious spiritual status possessed by the child. Various Protestant alternatives are described, including that held by "most of the Reformers." This is a view more like Bushnell's than Gladden's own. In this view infant baptism rests upon God's promises in the covenant which is to be kept by the faith of the parents. These alternatives are rejected by Gladden in favor of his own understanding of Frederick W. Robertson's view:

> . . . this sacrament of baptism is not regarded as the seal of a covenant, but rather as a solemn declaration of the fatherhood and redeeming love of God. . . . a solemn affirmation, made by the church, and assented to by the parent, that the child belongs to God; that God is his Father, Christ his Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit his Teacher and Inspirer. . . . The parents . . . should be made to promise that they will teach the child, as soon as he can comprehend the meaning of the words, whose child he is and what are his duties to his Father in heaven.
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> . . . there seems to be no conclusive reason why the children of parents who are not believers should not be declared to be the children of God, for such they are. . . . baptism makes no particle of change in their children; . . . they are no more sure to go to heaven when they die after than before baptism; . . . although they are God's children, they may, unless they are properly trained, grow up to be prodigal and rebellious children, and may wander away into the far country and perish there.[1]

Unbelieving parents must make the same promises as believing parents. Gladden would logically have to refuse to baptize their children if they would not do so: "All this

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1. Ibid., pp. 160 f.

closely connects the parents with the rite of infant baptism, and assumes that the sacrament can have no validity unless they take part in it."[1] They do not have to believe personally what they promise to teach the child, however, let alone have faith; and the truth declared is true with or without baptism. Still, Gladden will not say explicitly that baptism should be withheld if these minimal conditions are not met!

Joining the church. In the Word-constituted church of our first ideal-type there is a consistent place for the act of "confirmation" or becoming a member of the church after the age of understanding is reached. This was, of course, highly important in the Puritan church. There, however, it could not be construed as a purely voluntary act on the part of the individual member. His experience of regeneration and his voluntary act of committment were always to be set in the context of God's sovereign election. Gladden had no such doctrine of election. The act of joining the church was a completely free, voluntary act of self-determination. This is the real center which constitutes the church. It is not a sacrament, but it seems in fact to be more significant than either of the two sacraments, and is discussed side by side with them.

In the view which Gladden favors, it involves no requirement of creedal affirmation.[2] Gladden has no place for

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1. Ibid., p. 162.

2. Ibid., p. 169.

any standard involving philosophical conceptions of Christ's nature or the relation of his divinity to his humanity.[1] That there is an essential standard none the less is made clear in his specification of the sole exclusive basis with which no religious co-operation of the churches can dispense:

> They are Christian churches; and the very principle of their organization is loyalty to Jesus Christ. . . . All organizations taking part in such a union must be those that "hold to the Head." Acceptance of the lordship and leadership of Jesus Christ is the only bond of union between Christian believers; but this and this alone is essential to useful Christian fellowship. Those who can answer the Master's question, "Whom say ye that I am?" as Peter answered it, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," may surely be recognized as Christians.[2]

It is not clear that the candidate must be required to make this affirmation publicly, but the necessity of his holding it privately is clearly implied. In churches where a creedal affirmation is required the pastor does have a clear duty in this regard:

> . . . it will be his duty to bring home the obligation of publicly confessing their Lord to the minds of many who have been consecrated to his service in their infancy, and of many others who have not received such initiation into the divine society.[3]

In the case of the latter, no mention is made of baptism preceding reception as a member.

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1. Ibid., pp. 435 f.
2. Ibid., p. 435.
3. Ibid., pp. 168 f.

The ritual of admission is "one of the most solemn services of the altar to which the pastor is called . . ."[1] Under the standards favored by Gladden, its cultus seems to be essentially a polite refinement of the old revival altar-call:

> It is for [the pastor] . . . to set before them an open door, and to speak the invitation so graciously that they will be constrained to come in. And the moment when he meets on the threshold of the church these disciples who have been won to confession through his ministry will be to him and to them a moment of great seriousness. With great dignity, with entire simplicity, with deep tenderness of spirit the service ought to be conducted. The self-dedication of the candidates is a solemn act, and its significance ought to appear. But it is also a joyful and inspiring service to which they are devoting themselves, and the note of hope and exaltation must not be absent.[2]

The recruitment of volunteers for the work of the church. This is primarily a recruitment for service. Under the pastor's preaching -- combining teaching and evangelism -- these persons have become convinced, and have decided to enlist. The choice of work within this service is also voluntary: "Now let the pastor set to work to assign every one of his members, by their own consent, to some one of the various departments of work."[3] If they do not respond, the pastor's weapon is not exclusion but persistence.[4] He cannot possibly need more than this:

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1. Ibid., p. 168.
2. Ibid., p. 169.
3. Ibid., p. 423.
4. Ibid., pp. 419-425.

> The admission ought never to be made that any person can belong to a church without having some active part in its labor. That a pupil should be admitted to a school without any definite understanding that he should become actively interested in its studies, or that a soldier should be enlisted in an army without being required to perform any service, would seem an irrational proceeding; . . . The clear and emphatic statement of this principle, from time to time, will carry conviction to the minds of those who hear it. It is so manifestly true that they cannot deny it. . . . A thorough-going policy of this nature will commend itself to the reason of every intelligent person; . . .[1]

Teaching and evangelism continue to be central to the pastor's work with those who have been admitted to the church. Indeed, the greater part of such teaching belongs to that period. As in our first church-type, the Word is needed continually. Unlike that motif, the constituting and uniting power of the spoken Word owes more to its rational truth than to the encounter in faith. The latter element is still present, however.

Organism and mechanism. Thus are the themes of the Word-centered church inclined at every point toward our third church-motif. Each seeks at last to determine itself according to the needs of a koinonia transformed by love and set to work for the Kingdom of God on earth. The highly organized nature of the working koinonia also emphasizes the importance of volition to the success of the work.

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1. Ibid., pp. 424 f.

Bushnell's concept of organism in the church really means little more than organization, to Gladden. The difference between organism and mechanism is a matter of a mere analytical distinction, although an important one:

> It is here assumed that the church is both an organism and a mechanism. The conceptions are used interchangeably. . . . But if the two ideas are combined it is well that they be clearly discriminated, and not amalgamated. . . . the organic fact is the deepest, and to this the mechanical process must always adjust itself. Its organization is due to the unconscious and spontaneous action of the spiritual life within; its mechanism is the result of the application of human thought and volition to its processes of work. Mechanism is the child of invention, of contrivance; organization is the fruit of that Spirit of Life who divideth to each one severally as he will.
>
> Now it is evident that we must have a certain amount of mechanism in our church work. There must be wheels, and wheels within wheels. The prophet saw this in his vision long ago; that was a prediction which reached far into the future. The mind must work upon this problem, inventing processes, devising methods. The failure to use our minds in this way would result in fanaticism. There is great need of the use of all the wits we possess in meeting the difficulties that confront us, and in adjusting our forces to the work in hand.[1]

Gladden himself, we see, recognized the importance of a certain amount of emphasis upon the voluntaristic theme in attaining the needed institutionalization within the church. Our examination of the themes of institutionalism and voluntarism in Gladden's instrumentalist idea of the church has come full circle.

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1. Ibid., pp. 215 f.

The values and dangers of mechanism. Had Gladden not made the church instrumental to the kind of Kingdom of God which he conceived, would that have eliminated the problem of mechanism in the church? Clearly it would not. His idea of the working church was conceived in the context of a highly organized and pluralistic industrial culture. The main elements of that culture in America were already on the scene by the time The Christian Pastor was written. His eye did not miss those characteristics.

He sometimes shared the Social Gospel's characteristic hinting that the church had better align itself to the wave of the future if it is not to perish. At its best, his message to the church is that it dare not -- by its own internal basis -- see men lying mortally wounded by the destructive disorders of society and pass by on the other side. The church is not to be content with giving first-aid, but must gird itself for the task of stopping the carnage in ways informed by the divine love in which it trusts. A later generation, following in the footsteps of the Social Gospel, was to discover how very difficult it must always be to find such ways which are still socially realistic and effective. That did not seem quite so difficult to Gladden's optimistic mind.

We must not think, however, that he was entirely unaware of the problem of reconciling faith with effectiveness in social action:

> . . . there are those who greatly distrust this whole tendency. The multiplication of agencies and methods seems to them a dubious good. Faith in God is giving place, they say, to faith in machinery. In the perfection of methods the need of power is forgotten.
>
> Beyond controversy danger lies in this neighborhood. Yet the true wisdom co-ordinates these tendencies, always keeping the vital energies supreme, and making the mechanism subservient to life. The problem is to comprehend the adaptations which life produces and to shape our methods in accordance with these. Methods we must have; they ought to be such methods as "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" would naturally evolve; and they who have "the mind of the spirit" ought to be able to devise them. The curse of all ecclesiasticisms has been the swallowing up of life in what men call organization, which is not truly organization but mechanism. And this is the danger against which, in this day, we must be constantly on our guard. Yet we must not neglect to use the necessary instrumentalities. No matter how numerous are our wheels, if the Spirit of the Living Creature is in them.[1]

If that guiding Spirit should be lost by the churches, it cannot be lost by the Kingdom. Yet Gladden does not really believe that the church itself can lose that immanent Spirit. The precarious knife-edge of faith of our first church-motif has become too weak in Gladden's idea of the church to admit such radical fear and trembling. Curiously, our second church-motif persists in the naturalistic roots of Gladden's idea of the church. The church, in the last analysis, has a kind of intrinsic incorruptibility.

Instrumentalism and functional church architecture. The fundamental blending of our first and third motifs in Gladden's

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1. Ibid., p. 216.

idea of the church is nicely indicated by the architecture of the building which is to house the ideal working church. The first consideration is the matter of "the ethics of church architecture." The interests of the church have always been most closely identified with those of the working man, and the appearance of the building must invite fellowship across class-lines:

> The church may be solidly and beautifully built; it ought to be comfortable and commodious and bright and attractive; but it ought never to have the look of elegance or luxury. It should never be a building whose exterior or interior would make upon any working man the impression that the people worshipping in it were too fine to associate with him. A dignified simplicity should characterize all its features and appointments. Many churches are as ostentatious of splendor, without and within, as are the turnouts in which their worshippers display themselves in the park. To every passer-by they loudly proclaim, "It is not the elect, it is the elite, who congregate here: Procul, O procul este profani!" Such churches, and their entire administration, are a hideous travesty of the religion of the Nazarene. . . . every Christian congregation must bear in mind who is its Master, and who are his friends, -- the people in its neighborhood with whom he is most closely identified . . ."[1]

The size of the structure will be functionally determined by the size of congregation which is most efficient in carrying out the work of the Kingdom:

> The policy of concentration, which is so successful in commercial enterprises, does not work so well in ecclesiastical enterprises. Two churches of six or seven hundred members will generally

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1. Ibid., p. 26 f.

> accomplish far more than one church of twelve or fourteen hundred members.[1]

The reason for this fact is, of course, that the effectiveness of the church's work depends upon the closeness of its fellowship. The number, kind and arrangement of rooms is to be functionally adapted to the particular work in which this church is engaged in its community, as a factory is suited to the manufacture of its particular product.[2] The high importance of preaching is not to be neglected, however:

> In churches whose chief function is that of teaching, it would also seem reasonable to expect that much regard would be paid to the properties of the church as an auditorium. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" is a question not much more pertinent than "How shall they hear the preacher?" It would be well if architects could be impressed with the truth that all archtectural effects must be subordinated to the uses of the church as a place of worship. The first problem to be solved is that of bringing the whole congregation under the leader's eye, and within easy range of his voice.[3]

What is the second problem of worshipful architecture we shall never know, for Gladden never got around to saying. What he did say is sufficient to show that the personal element in preaching was as important to Gladden's koinonia as it was to Finney's, despite the differences in content. Here is but one more way in which the similarities between their two

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
2. Ibid., pp. 27 f.
3. Ibid., p. 27.

conceptions of the process of salvation were reflected in their respective ideas of the church.

A Portrait of Gladden's Liberal Idea of the Church

Gladden has given us a very explicit picture of the working church and its theological basis in his mind. We may thus summarize the movement from the process of salvation to the idea of the church more succinctly in his case than in those of Finney and Bushnell.

A Voluntary Salvation Through the Power of Sentiment

Salvation through the Kingdom of God in society. Pelagian tendencies in the conception of the process of salvation were already quite pronounced in Finney's views. These were curbed considerably, strangely enough, in the views of the father of American liberalism. Bushnell's romantic sense of organic solidarity in sin and salvation left no room for the radical voluntarism of Finney's process. At the same time, he stoutly emphasized the genuine freedom and self-determining power of the will in the process. In Gladden, romanticism had degenerated appreciably toward sentimentalism. There a confident Pelagian tone reappeared along with the diminution of awareness of a truly radical problem of sin and a truly organic anthropology.

The salvation of society is assured by the steady evolution of the Kingdom of God on earth. The salvation of the individual is not quite so inevitable. It depends upon his being related to the process of the Kingdom in society. The form of the Kingdom's progress may take shape as a drastic revolution rather than a gradual evolution, and this threatens the individual's salvation even if it does not threaten the Kingdom. Those who place themselves upon the wrong side of the upward struggle may well be lost by dying outside the growing Kingdom -- either during the upheaval or before it happens.

The church as a secondary locus of salvation. Relation to the Kingdom may well take place apart from any connection with the church. The church is nevertheless the primary instrument of the Kingdom, and the normal place for one to find relationship to its growth by working to further its growth. Entry into the work of the Kingdom is not difficult. Men have but to make the decision to do so. Enlightenment and persuasion can help in winning that decision, however. Love is what wins this committment and empowers the work in which loyalty to Christ is expressed. The love of God is shown in the teachings and sacrificial life of Jesus. Rational argument referring to inductive observations of life will persuade the mind that Jesus' revealed law of love is the real pattern upon which life is based, through the immanence of God in nature.

The kindly sentiments natural to good human nature are the indispensible key to the process of salvation. These sentiments will be brought to the surface and intensified by the minister's presentation of love as the basis of life together with the wretched plight of the unloved.

Loving sentiments are not enough. They must be translated into self-sacrificing action. All that is needed in order that this shall happen is for the minister to be persistent in saying so and to concretize the inspiring example of Jesus in his own life and action. Sentiment, effectively stimulated, thus remains the only thing needful to empower the will to make its decision for the Kingdom.

The decision is usually made gradually, and reinforced continually by the continuation of this instruction. The sense of the importance of the decision is not accompanied by a high sense of crisis, because it is not such a difficult decision for a man to make as it was seen to be by Finney and Bushnell. If it is given half a chance it will come by a gradual, healthy evolution rather than by a violent revolution.

Entry Into the Church by Birth Into a Neighborhood and by Voluntary Affiliation

The church as a parish. Gladden assessed the root of the problems of his society as lying in its division into two antagonistic classes -- capital and labor. The basic work in-

volved in the building of the Kingdom of God must be the reconciliation of these two classes. In this work the church ought to be the primary instrument, because in it the power of Christian love has the opportunity to produce a closer union of men than in any other social context. There men are gathered in one place with this love as the only rationale for their coming together. The local church is thus naturally suited to become a true koinonia in which every person shares deep ties of love with every other without regard to social distinctions of wealth, status or education.

The primary problem is one of getting both classes into the same church. Both the character of the church's primary role in the Kingdom and that of the process of salvation thus press for the maximum emphasis upon inclusiveness. The way of entry into the church must be cleared of every obstacle short of abandoning the distinctive standard of Christly love which gives its existence any sense.

The two classes are extremely reticent to associate with one another. The working man's heart is in the right place, however, and he needs only to be shown that he is welcome. The rest must be persuaded to accept him, and to make every possible effort to induce him to come into the fellowship. There are persons of the working class in or near every neighborhood. The church must thus define itself as a parish instead of just a congregation, and include within its commun-

ity all those in the neighborhood who are not under the care of another local church. One is born into a working church by being born into its neighborhood.

The church as a voluntary association. The nature of the process of salvation permits and encourages such inclusiveness. The love which is required of members of the koinonia is already there in good human nature, and requires only to be educed and activated. The first step is to translate the individual externally into the sphere of grace. Men must be brought into the congregation where they can hear the preacher.

Even this step requires the voluntary decision of the parishioner, however. He must come of his own free will at the behest of a winsome invitation. Constraint would be inconsistent with the character of the fellowship into which he is to be persuaded to enter, and furthermore, there is no effective way in which it could be applied other than persuasion.

The inner church is the committed, working koinonia. This, no man can be born into, by its very nature. It must be entered voluntarily by conscious affirmation of the love which is its center and to which it gives itself in devoted labor for the Kingdom.

Inclusion of children. A child may enter this fellowship gradually and imperceptibly as its parents teach it of the Fatherhood of God and the love of Christ and the duties

which follow therefrom. The whole family is included in a sense, in this way. This mode of entry differs from Bushnell's Christian nurture, however. It does not rest principally upon the supernatural sanctification of the organic family ties by the faith of the parents. It rests rather upon the beliefs of the parents which are taught to the child and upon conscious directives to put those beliefs into action. The child is not really included in the inner fellowship until he has accepted these truths and put them into action appropriate to his age-level. There is thus a minimal age limit at the point where intelligent communication of some kind can begin.

The child is not barred from salvation below that age, however. Salvation is not confined to the church, and does not require inclusion in the church. There is no original sin to contend with, let alone any guilt conveyed by original sin. Human nature is basically good, and men risk destruction only by straying from their natural status as children of God by their own guilty intention or negligence.

The voluntary mode of entry into Gladden's church also differs from that conceived by Finney. The voluntary act of association with the cause of Christ in the church does not involve a fierce struggle of will, ordinarily, and the persuasion which assists the decision need not be so forceful. There is not so much sense of crisis involved in the decision. Bushnell's Christian nurture has been tamed and naturalized until

the element of crisis is nearly gone. Even in the case of an adult conversion, the element of reversal is subordinated to that of the flowering of a suppressed goodness which was there all along.

The sacraments. The sacraments as such play no important role in entry into the church. Baptism symbolizes the natural status of child of God. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the decision already made to identify oneself with the sacrificial love of Christ. Baptism of infants does aid the parent in seeing his duty, however, and is in this way an aid to the child's eventual entrance into the church. As a mere symbol of a known truth it is hard to consider it an extremely important aid, although it is clearly valuable none the less. Its real effectiveness even as practiced under Gladden's directives is hardly done justice by his theory.

The Church Is Inclusive but the Kingdom Is More Inclusive

A combination of inclusiveness and high standards of membership. The essence of the church is defined in part by the conditions of men which are included within it. Its basic tendency is toward the greatest possible inclusiveness, at the expense of its standards of membership. At the level of its greatest inclusiveness, it may include every conceivable state of spiritual evolution. Boss Tweed himself apparently would not be barred from its doors, nor even disbarred from its membership if he already enjoyed that legal status.

There is a church-within-the-church, however. This is the koinonia of men meeting in that particular place whose relationships with one another and with men in society have been transformed by Christian love. It is constituted by their individual voluntary decisions to believe in the power of that love and to act in loyalty to it by following the example of Christ who taught it. Once within that working fellowship, they are bound together by more than their own voluntary act of joining it. The love which is active there is itself a cohesive force outweighing any individual's contribution to it. It is in a sense a living thing with a life which depends upon the existence of the whole but not of any one part.

Ideally, formal membership is to be identified with full participation in this koinonia. Actually, some members will not participate fully. The ideal is thought to be fully realizable -- not by raising the requirements of membership and excluding those who do not measure up, but by showing the members that it is irrational for them to refuse or fail to act according to the highest standard. The church is essentially such a koinonia, and all who are drawn within its doors will soon find themselves deciding to enter into it fully.

The essence of the church is the loving fellowship. Thus it turns out that the essence of the church cannot be distinguished from that of any other social group by reference to who it includes unless we consider it to include only those active-

ly within the koinonia. Yet under Gladden's ideas even that does not serve to distinguish the church from society. The intense koinonia of the church is only the concentration of the love which pervades society in the Kingdom of God.

The church must therefore be defined by a specialized function rooted in the division of labor within the Kingdom's total work. The church's special function is the propagation of the love which empowers every phase of the work of the total Kingdom as well as empowering its own propagation. The highly organized work of the church is varied in form, but all of it is some form of establishment of fellowship. The church is thus to be understood as the particular institution within society in which this function is concentrated and localized in order that its product may be distributed in greater abundance.

The church is the local fellowship. The Church of Jesus Christ is therefore intrinsically local. It exists only in its local units, each of which is the brain of the Kingdom of God in its local community. These many brains are each the seat of one common mind, however, and so the church also exists in any locality where members of the local churches of different places meet one another face to face for the special business which belongs to the church rather than to some other organ of the Kingdom. Whether we speak of the local church or the ecumenical church, the church is still a particular institution located in one place. Only its special function distinguishes

it from the whole body of the Kingdom, but that distinction is essential and definitive of the church.

Some comparisons with Finney and Bushnell on the church and the Kingdom. Gladden's distinction of the church from the Kingdom of God indicates a striking difference between his idea of the church and that of either Finney or Bushnell. For all three men, the church, in the ideal, is inseparably related to the Kingdom. For Finney and Bushnell the primary point preventing too close an identification of the two is some form of the problem of the imperfection and sin of the actual church at its best.

Gladden is also concerned about the failure of the church to live up to its best standards. At the same time all that is necessary for the church to come up to those standards is just for the men within it to go ahead and do so. The same may be said for Finney's views, but the act of will required is not so difficult in Gladden's view.

Thus the imperfection of the coming church is not even as much a detriment to Gladden's identification of it with the Kingdom as to Finney's. At the same time, Gladden's Kingdom has become identified with society in a way impossible to Finney. In the process, the Kingdom has become less perfect than the ideal church, in a sense. The Kingdom must still engage in unloving activities which even the present imperfect church is too pure to undertake.

As a correlary to this attitude, there are Christian duties which are inconsistent with the church's function and which must take place outside the church if the Kingdom is to grow. Under present conditions within the church, at least, there are men engaged in the Kingdom's work who are not in the church -- and for the Kingdom's own good reasons. For Finney and Bushnell, not all those in the church are yet in the Kingdom. For Gladden, not all those in the Kingdom are yet in the church!

PART IV

THE CHURCH AND CHANGING CHRISTIAN SOCIAL STRATEGIES

CHAPTER IX

FINNEY: REVIVALISM, THE ACTIVITY CHURCH AND REFORM THROUGH VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS

Church Action and Individual Action

Agreements and Disagreements

Finney, Bushnell and Gladden each asserted that the believer's relation to God obligates him to be socially concerned and to take action upon controversial social and political issues because these are moral matters. They also agree in their different ways that questions of behavior and policy in society at large are not the concern of individual Christians alone. The community of believers in the church should be concerned about these matters as a body. These convictions were characteristic of most of the clerical leadership of nineteenth-century American Congregationalism during each of the stages of its development. In the course of its development certain differences emerged within that persisting framework of agreement. Each change can be illustrated by the thought and work of one of the three leaders whose views we have been examining. The conception of the process of salvation changed, and Christian social duties were no longer anchored in the same part of the process nor related to it in quite the same way. The unity and the impor-

tance of the community of believers received different amounts and kinds of emphasis as our development ran its course. Inadequate theories of community are apt to result in inadequate communities. Some important degree of genuine community did in fact exist in each period among believers in the church none the less. Upon this reality each of our three leaders counted heavily.

Our purpose in the remaining part of this study is to ask what each of these men proposed be done to implement the social concern which the church must feel. Each agrees that the duty of both the individual Christian and of the church itself goes beyond the mere holding of a social concern. The individual Christian must enact his faith in his social relations as a parent, as an economic agent and as citizen. The form of individual action varies somewhat among our three men. In addition, the church itself must take action of some kind. All agree that the church has an intrinsic responsibility to foster social concern among its own members. It must also provide a certain amount of education about the nature of the moral issues involved and the duty of the Christian in his approach to the issues.

Beyond that point larger differences appear among our three men over church-action than over individual ac-

tion. Each agrees that the church, as such, has something more to do than prod consciences and educate. Upon the question of how much more and what to do, they part company. Should the church place primary reliance upon the action of individual Christians through their nominally secular associations and capacities? Or should the church itself try to influence the state directly by acting to control or influence the state's electoral and legislative processes? Should it do so indirectly instead, by undertaking drastic action against some of its own members? Is power a weapon appropriate to use in any form by the church? These are but a few of the questions upon which our three figures do not see entirely eye to eye.

Patterns of Collective Action

The church and social strategy. These and other important questions of Christian social ethics are drawn to a focus in the problem of formulating and advocating a general strategy coordinating the social action of the individual Christian and that of the church as a community. Such a general plan of action existed, at least in outline, in the mind of each of the men we are studying. We shall look first at the specific social ills which most concerned each. We shall note why each man considered

them to be evils, his analysis of the reasons for their existence, the way in which he thought they should be solved, and the part to be played by Christians in bringing this about. This part of our treatment will be quite general. Detailed information is now readily available in up to date literature including the social ideas of these three men among others in its scope. A strategy can hardly be comprehended, however, unless we know what results the strategist expects it to accomplish. This reason alone would oblige us to construct for ourselves at least a thumb-nail sketch of the social ideas of our three figures. In addition, the particular engagements involved in their social recommendations and acts form the component parts of the larger strategy in which we are interested. When we relate these pieces to one another they give us a good indication of the broad strategy which related them in the mind of each of our men.

As we describe each man's social strategy we shall include in our discussion its relation to his idea of the church. Two questions should especially be borne in mind in all that we have to say here. The first is: What is the role of the church in the action contemplated by the social strategy under examination? Is this role consistent with the nature of the church as

understood by the strategist? The second is: To what extent do changes in the same presuppositions about man, society and the process of salvation which enter into the idea of the church find parallel expression in the changed conception of a Christian social strategy in each case?

Three patterns of social action. There seem to be three broad patterns which have characterized collective social action within American Christianity. Some Christian social action has followed the pattern which is generally to be found where there is an established church. This pattern presupposes a Christian nation in at least the nominal sense -- or at least a government which holds itself morally accountable to Christian principles and listens with respect to the moral counsels of the church. The state takes the direct action, on social matters; but some form of real agreement exists between the state and the church, which is a concerned party.

A second pattern is that in which the church refrains from direct relations of any kind with the state and its machinery, and approaches the reform of society through the reforming of individuals. Christian individuals then may join together apart from official relationship to the church to act upon social matters. Non-

Christians may be included in these associations.

A third pattern is that in which official or quasi-official church bodies undertake direct action in the processes of the state or the social body without having any special relationship to the state itself by either recognized or tacit concordat.

Each of the latter two patterns assume at least an institutional and legal separation of church and state, whereas the first does not require that assumption. The first pattern, however, may still exist where institutional and legal separation are present. It would not seem from our study that this first pattern had disappeared so completely from the American scene with the end of the last establishments in the nineteenth century as is commonly supposed. Reflections of all three of these patterns appear in one way or another in the strategies which we now turn to examine. We begin with Finney.

The Social Issues and Their Solution According to Revivalism.

The new revivalism of the type more or less within the Finney circle had a penchant for concentrating upon specific problems of social morality, often building each one up to the proportions of a grave issue of national social policy. In some cases the judgment was warranted -- most notably the climactic one of slavery.

In other instances, such as Sabbatarianism, the issue's importance was grossly exaggerated.

Agreement was widespread among the evangelists of the new revivalism upon the identity and nature of the major social problems. Behind the shared attitudes of these men toward those problems -- and even toward other problems deemed less pressing -- there was a markedly uniform conception of what is good and what is not, and why.[1] There was also a broad consistency in basic social strategy and hence in the pattern of social activities through which the strategy was carried out.

No one revivalist's list of the chief social issues to be covered by such a strategy could be entirely representative. Finney himself had great weight in the circle of those who listened to him, however, and his specification will serve our purposes quite adequately. In 1841 he provided such a list for his followers. The crucial areas of social concern are: abolition of slavery, temperance, moral reform, politics, business principles, physiological and dietetic reform.

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 228-236.

Slavery

The problem. The theological basis of Finney's condemnation of slaveholding as a sin was his very personal and immediate sense of the sovereignty of God. In this he was much more like Jonathan Edwards than were some of his older contemporaries and predecessors. True, any notion of a predestinarian determination of the human will by God or of the irresistibility of grace was to Finney but "another death-dealing tradition of the elders."[1] Furthermore, Finney's sense of God's sovereignty lies in the immediate relevance and supremacy of His moral law rather than in immediate confrontation with a living, personal will as for Edwards. But these laws, to Finney, were not those of an absentee monarch as they so often seem to be in the mind of Lyman Beecher.[2]

Slaveholding is wrong because it violates the moral law. God's laws are not entirely remote and irrefrangible to Finney, but they are none the less unalterable by men, and transgression against them can be condoned under no circumstances.

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1. Finney, Sermons on Important Subjects (3rd ed.; New York, 1836), pp. 81 f. cf. Lectures on systematic Theology, p. 3.

2. See H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America, pp. 102, 173.

> We regard it, as a well settled principle of both common and constitutional law, that no human legislation can annul, or set aside, the law or authority of God . . . . The most able writers on elementary law, have laid it down as a first principle, that whatever is contrary to the law of God, is not law.[1]

This is exactly the point which had caught Finney's attention while studying Blackstone and other books of common law, which in turn led him to the Bible and to his conversion. It is scarcely any wonder that, as Cole has shown, Finney was preaching this famous "higher law" doctrine years before it was articulated by Theodore Parker, Seward or Henry Ward Beecher,[2] who are generally given the credit for it.

To Finney's mind no distinction is possible between the violation of God's law and willful sin against His person. Sin is always willful rebellion against God, and whatever man does of good or evil is done by his own will and in rejection of the truth. The practice of slave holding, however, Finney regarded as among the worst offenses against Christian standards. To begin with, the principle that any man can own another is wrongheaded. For this kind of error there is no excuse, since only a man's own stubborn will shuts out the Spirit and His truth.

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1. Charles G. Finney, quoted in Report of the Fourth Anniversary of the Ohio Antislavery Society, p. 16; cited in Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 209.

2. Cole, Ibid., pp. 208 f.

The practical effect of slavery on the slave is particularly emphasized by Finney, however, as by Bushnell. If moral principle does not make the un-Christian character of the practice clear, the condition of actual slaves should demonstrate that this cannot be the product of disinterested benevolence toward one's fellow man. The members of slave families are sold to different owners, so that an already difficult family life becomes impossible to maintain. Slaves, of course, may be inhumanly treated without adequate recourse to the law. Above all, slaveholders discourage or even forcibly oppose religious attention to the slaves for fear of incitement to disobedience or rebellion. To "crush our brother" in this manner is unconscionable even if sanctioned by the laws of the land.[1] It contradicts the very essence of benevolent Christianity.

Finney's views on the sin of slavery evolved rapidly, as we have seen. He soon became convinced that it is impossible to be a Christian at all and engage in this practice.[2] The whole health of the nation depends upon its moral government by the law of God. A flagrant immorality such as slavery is bound to undermine society. It breaks down the integrity of the

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1. Finney, quoted in Ohio Antislavery Report, p. 13; cited in Cole, Ibid., p. 210.

2. Supra, p. 214.

slave owner and of the nation which permits it to go on.

The remedy. Finney declared: "...we deem it highly improper, for Christians to decline acting on the subject of slavery and emancipation, ... when the means of prevention are peaceable, and within our power."[1] The action to be taken within the church is for the minister and the brethren of the holy koinonia to reprove the slave-owner for his sin, privately, and then publicly if he persists. If he does not respond to reproof, he is to be barred from the congregation and the fellowship of his church.[2]

Outside the koinonia in society, ministers and laymen -- each class in its own appropriate way -- are to prick the public conscience and arouse mass feeling against the evil. Laymen, given impetus by the revivalist, are to join with whoever will do battle for the cause, organizing local antislavery associations and heading these up in a national Society. Here the problem of all "popular fronts" comes into the picture. What philosophy of reform is to prevail in the organization -- Christian or secular? The goal must be abolition,

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1. Finney, quoted in Ohio Antislavery Report, p. 19; cited in Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 210.

2. Supra, p. 214.

but of that there are various kinds. Finney and Theodore Dwight Weld opposed the Garrisonian variety, and did not join forces with its adherants. The latter most often seemed more interested in condemning the sin than in the welfare, education and evangelizing of the slaves. For Finney, the sin must be condemned, but Christian benevolence is primary. In this matter he shared the attitude of Hopkins, Woolman, the Methodists, Alexander and the Baptists -- to name but a few of the most outstanding Christian men and groups which led in antislavery activity within the churches.[1]

The drive to organize these societies employed techniques drawn straight from the revival meeting, and the two efforts were sometimes conjoined. A front-rank leader in this was Weld. He had been a member of Finney's "holy band" of co-workers at revivals, having been converted at one of Finney's revivals near Utica, New York, while a student at Hamilton College.

At Lane Seminary, Weld converted the large part of the student body to abolitionism. This he accomplished in a gradual, persuasive manner which reflected his own variety of immediatism; gradual steps, but beginning right away. He was more interested in conversion than in denunciation, and the first step was

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1. See H. R. Niebuhr, Kingdom of God, p. 121.

to come to recognize the sin for what it was. In protest against suppression of discussion of their views at Lane, these students withdrew, and a new college was set up at Oberlin under the Presidency of Asa Mahan, an ardent antislavery pastor. Finney was soon induced to fill the professorship of systematic theology and, eventually, the Presidency. There Finney, Mahan, Cowles and Morgan developed the concept of sanctification as a higher Christianity.

Coming out of this company, Weld became an organizer for the American Anti-Slavery Society in Ohio. He used the technique of the protracted meeting and the revival sermon to persuade men of the evils of the slavery system, to convert men to Christianity so they would oppose sin, and then to induce them to take a stand against it and make pledges for abolition.[1] In Weld, incidentally, the millenarian note was strong.[2]

Temperance

The problem. Finney's stand against the use of "ardent spirits" was the only thing he put above revivals themselves in importance, because he believed the failure of the temperance movement would put an end to revivals themselves.[3] It appears that the special status of drink-

1. Brauer, Protestantism in America, pp. 176 ff.
2. H. R. Niebuhr, Kingdom of God, p. 157.
3. Supra, p. 215. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 123.

ing as a sin was based on his estimate of its effects as precluding health and benevolent activity, and hence resulting in inevitable disregard of the "light that is shed upon" the Christian.[1]

The temperance movement began as temperance, but soon amounted to total abstinence. Finney considered this the only Christian position. A prime reason seems to have been his conviction that anything else will be used by the drunkard as a sop to his conscience. "It is not needful that a person should rail at the cold-water society, in order to be on the best of terms with drunkards and moderate drinkers," he declared. "Only let him plead for the moderate use of wine . . . and all the drunkards account him on their side."[2] Mere aloofness is a pernicious sin for a Christian.[3]

The remedy. The organized "cold-water society" itself is of great importance. But Finney is also convinced that in this matter the koinonia of the church itself has the internal power to put an end to the "death-dealing abomination" by barring its doors against users and sellers.[4] This pattern of direct action by the church

1. Ibid.
2. Cole, ibid.
3. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, p. 265.
4. Ibid., p. 281.

does not conform to our "established church" type of pattern, since the state is not involved in the church's direct action at all. Finney's proposal does presuppose that America has a Christian government at least to the extent that church members constitute a decisive political majority, and the majority can control the government.[1]

Individual Christian citizens are urged to organize and to induce the state to bring legislative action. Even in society at large, however, reproof of individual citizen by individual citizen is the primary tool of action. This is no invasion of individual privacy: "When a man merchandised poison, it was Finney's business and, he added, 'it is everybody's concern, and every man is bound to rebuke his crime till he gives it up, and ceases to destroy the lives and souls of his neighbors.'"[2]

Although evidence is somewhat inconclusive, it does appear that alcoholism and compulsive drinking was a considerable social problem in this period.[3] America was in the early stages of the industrial revolution and the rise of urbanization, having lagged behind England in this by half a century or more. Many of the same conditions may be seen to have existed which gave

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1. Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians, pp. 103-105.

2. Ibid., p. 55.

3. Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 116 f.

rise to a severe drinking problem among Wesley's early followers in the Methodist movement in England.

Moral Reform

The category of moral reform included a miscellaneous horde of problems and corrective enterprises. They ranged all the way from reforming prostitutes and fallen adolescent girls to opposing card-playing, the theatre, dancing and Sabbath-breaking. The former often involved a ministry to considerable human tragedy; the latter concerned matters which were certainly not above criticism, although the criticism offered was generally infused with petty moralism. None of these problems seems clearly to have constituted an actual menace to social health of serious extent -- except perhaps prostitution, which seems to have been open and flourishing extensively despite its illegal status.

Finney was especially agitated about the fate of the Sabbath as a national institution. If the mails and the Post Offices operate on Sunday, why not also the courts and legislatures? He seems to reflect an institutional concern for the future of the church in this matter, although the use of the word church in the following remarks may be a mere synonym for Christianity in the context (as it so often was for Finney):

> ...unless something is done, and done speedily ... to promote the sanctification of the Sabbath by the church, the Sabbath will go by the board. And what can the church do, what will this nation do, WITHOUT ANY SABBATH? [1]

Finney favored the organized General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, but contributed primarily his sermonizing.[2]

Politics

Views on Politics. We have already examined Finney's grounds for political concern and education by ministers and laymen in the church, and the action in which this enlightenment was to be carried out by each.[3] Again disinterested benevolence and sanctification are primary in the theological rationale. Where these principles are involved, the political nature of a question is no proper reason for refraining from proclamation and action.[4] We may here call attention to some of the political convictions which Finney shared with a majority of his contemporaries in the ministry, including Bushnell. For that matter, Gladden still shared them on the whole.

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1. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, p. 280.
2. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 108.
3. Supra, pp. 218 f.
4. Cf. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 210.

Finney wrote little of a political nature, but what he did write fits the general pattern. The supremacy of the law of God is the key-note:

> ....true political economy must consist in national and individual obedience to the law of God. This idea of the obligation of nations and governments to conform to the moral law ... is becoming developed in the minds of statesmen.[1]

He agreed with Lyman Beecher that the American republic "in its constitution and laws, is of heavenly origin. It was not borrowed from Greece or Rome, but from the Bible."[2] Albert Barnes went so far as to proclaim, as Finney would not, that "all our institutions are based on the gospel."[3]

Stemming from the conviction of the supremacy of divine law was the common rejection of social contract theories of government. The powers of the state derive from divine law and appointment rather than from human arrangements -- although nobody would deny that the latter are necessary in the formation and the working of a government. Drastic measures were consistently disapproved, and the Dorr Rebellion caused some considerable agitation over the possibility of revolution.[4]

In the great battle against infidelity during the

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1. Finney to Henry Cowles, Dec. 23, 1841, quoted ibid., p. 145.

2. Lyman Beecher, Lectures on Political Atheism (London, n.d.), pp. 174 f.

3. Albert Barnes, The Literature and Science of America (Utica, New York, 1836), p. 27.

4. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 140.

turn-of-the-century revivals, the respectable church-going public as a whole tended to a high degree of identification of religion with Federalism, being suspicious of the deistic roots of Jeffersonian democracy. The same suspicion lingered during the generation of Finney and Bushnell, but hardly amounted to any uniform trend toward conservative political allignment. Hamiltonian Federalism was a dead position after 1815 and it left its legacy to Clay and "the American system." There was little policy dissension left by 1820, and the election of 1824 was primarily a contest of personalities issuing in no majority. But after 1824, changing circumstances in the West and in the cities brought to the fore new issues which involved primarily economic and financial matters.

Finney and Joshua Leavitt and their circles of close followers were antipathetic toward General Jackson, considering him personally unfit to head the government.[1] That hardly put even them squarely on the side of opposition to grass-roots democracy, however. Finney's increased concern for the common schools is a reflection of his interest in the plain people, for instance, and is consistent with his depreciation of social and educational sophistication of all kinds.

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 140.

As we shall see immediately below he consistently attacked the right of the wealthy to be absorbed in their wealth and its pursuit. Finney's two visits to England increased his interest in political liberty and equalitarianism. His impact on his followers -- including those of the merchant class -- is indicated by the remarks of Lewis Tappan after the influence of Finney, Beecher and others: "I am more democratic than I was when I lived in Boston."[1]

Henry F. May, in The Protestant Churches and Industrial Democracy, maintains that the American churches were essentially conservative prior to the Civil War.[2] The same opinion has been expressed often by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., who acted as an advisor to May.

It will be seen from our description that Finney's action did not exhibit a consistent pattern of conservatism any more than one of radicalism unless anyone who was not a Jacksonian democrat is taken to be a conservative.[3] Cole's survey of the social ideas of a quite representative group of top evangelistic lead-

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1. Ibid., p. 155, quoting Lewis Tappan to Benjamin Tappan, April 23, 1849.

2. Henry F. May, The Protestant Churches and Industrial Democracy (New York, 1949).

3. Methodist Peter Cartwright was not a conservative even by this definition. He designated himself "a simon pure Andrew Jackson democrat," serving for two years as a member of the Illinois legislature. He also ran for Congress, but was defeated by his opponent, Abraham Lincoln.

ers in the North indicates a variety of political leanings on the part of these men, and a general dissatisfaction with political parties of whichever stripe.[1] Some additional evidence pointing to the same conclusion in the case of other figures is supplied by the information given by Bodo.[2] Bodo himself appears to agree to the notion that the clergy were generally conservative in this period.

Political action. Finney's own political action was confined to those channels which he commended to ministers.[3] These were primarily internal to the revival cultus, but not necessarily to the church as such. It included his personal attendance and leadership as a private citizen at the meetings of reform societies whose work had recognized political bearing and partisan preferences. He tried scrupulously to distinguish the two roles of minister and citizen but of course he could not shed the personal influence he carried as a minister and a famous revivalist -- nor did he try to do so.

In men of his moral-absolutistic temperament, the maintenance of the distinction itself was significant evidence of a certain persistent refusal to identify the gospel and the church with either side of any given political argument over social policy -- granted the ex-

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, Chap. v, see esp. 138-141, 155.
2. Bodo, Protestant Clergy.
3. Supra, pp. 170 f.

ception of slavery and temperance in the eyes of Finney and many others. Even in the latter two matters there were casuistic steps intervening, which were not to be overlooked.

The revivalist felt he had a right to a party affiliation as a citizen, yet he leaned heavily toward independency as a political maxim and did not identify affiliation with the party he disfavored as a sin. He vigorously criticized absolutism in party loyalty -- whether for idealistic reasons or those of power. Loyalty to right is always to determine a Christian's vote even when it conflicts with political realism and effectiveness. Almost inevitably this was couched in terms of the politician's personal morality. Much criticism was voiced of the lack of personal integrity on the part of candidates.

Finney felt party politics on the whole to be "perfectly dishonest" at the present time. For this reason, he declared that "No man can be an honest man that is committed to a party, to go with them, let them do what they may." Christians should not vote for the lesser of two evils. He believed that there were enough Christian voters to determine the outcome of any election. "Now let Christians take the ground that they will not vote for a dishonest man, or a Sabbath-breaker,

or gambler, or whoremonger, or duellist, for any office and no party could ever nominate such a character with any hope of success." If Christians conscientiously refused to vote for the "ungodly", Finney said, "a blessed influence would go over the land like a wave."[1]

What is the Christian voter to do if he is posed with a choice limited to two candidates so morally disqualified? There Finney drops any vestige of political realism and considers that it would be a powerful demonstration for the whole Christian majority to abstain from voting for either, in protest! Perhaps he felt that the persuasion of the Holy Spirit would reach the heart of the sinful politician through the voice of such a testimonial to the power of righteousness among such a mass of men. Bushnell took the same position, but backed it with a scheme recognizing the importance of realistic capturing of power as well as righteous protest.

Business Principles

The problem. In this area Finney gives expression to a theme characteristic of the new spirit of the Great Revivals:

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1. Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians, pp. 103, ff.

> ... it organized new orders of Protestant "friars," preachers of the gospel and charitable societies which practiced not so much an intraworldly asceticism as intraworldly loyalty to the kingdom of God.[1]

While this description covers more than economic attitudes, it covers them, too.

The great criticism was not directed toward the system but toward the lack of the individual businessman's self-regulation according to the principle of disinterested benevolence and loyalty to the kingdom of Christ. One hears almost the very words of Luther as Finney denounces the economic maxim "to buy as cheap as you can, and sell as dear as you can -- to look out for number one."[2] The echo of Jonathan Edwards is clearly heard as he proclaims: "The whole course of business in the world is governed by the maxims of supreme and unmixed selfishness."[3]

To change this, there must be "a radical overturning in both the world and the church upon the subject of money making."[4] The attitude of much of the world, and worst of all, the church, present a direct contradiction of the principle of disinterested benevolence.

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1. H. R. Niebuhr, Kingdom of God, p. 119.

2. Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians, p. 95.

3. Ibid.

4. Finney to Cowles, Dec. 23, 1841, quoted in Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 168.

The remedy. The "radical overturning" was to be an internal one rather than a revolution of outward practice and social structures. The answer is to revive individual businessmen, organize them into prayer-groups, and bring them around to the renunciation of moneymaking as an aim and to the devotion of all of the money which they would continue to make at the same rate to benevolent enterprises on a grand scale. This program was shared by evangelists such as Albert Barnes and Justin Edwards, but Finney was the one who pushed the program through to actuality on a big scale.[1] His feminine revival agents "would visit the stores and places of business, and use all their influence to secure the attendance .. of the persons engaged in these establishments."[2] Reaching merchants like the Tappan brothers through revivals, he induced them to stop dabbling in charity and reform and completely dedicate their entire wealth to it, renouncing all acquisition for themselves.

The Church and Finney's Strategy for Social Reform

The Objective and the Theory of Strategy

What is the great plan of attack -- the grand strategy for the reform of American society -- in which

1. Cole, ibid. , p. 102

2. Finney, Memoirs, p. 438.

this whole pattern of Christian social action may be seen to coallesce? It is one, first of all which expects to produce in American society a "radical overturning in . . . the world" in very visible matters of morality and policy and not in the heart alone. It expects to win a great war -- if not, indeed, The Great War. The millenarian overtones are not uniform in these men, but they are pervasive of the whole movement.

In the second place, it is a strategy which presupposes that there can be no radical overturning in the world without a radical overturning in the heart of the individual. The conversion of the sinner and the sanctification of the Christian are prior to social transformation in the order of time as well as in the order of theological reasoning. Yet the latter follows directly and inevitably from the former because of all that is expressed in Finney's idea of entire sanctification. It is thus a strategy which at one and the same time brooks no content with amelioration and seeks no change in social structure. The whole effort is set within a passion for organization, yet all is aimed from beginning to end at producing a change in the individual.

If society is to be overturned for Christ, the church must be overturned for Christ; yet the two overturnings are related primarily by parallelism. With

limited exceptions, the church is not the medium through which society is to be reformed but the collection of individuals who are being reformed -- whose reformations accrue to the church as they do to society. The church is definitely regarded as subordinate and instrumental -- but to revivals, not directly to social reform. In either case its instrumentality is not clearly regarded as important, but is frequently called upon none the less.

The naturalness of the assumption of reform through the distinctive revivalistic combination of the personal conference with the individual and the address to a mass of individuals is indicated by Lyman Beecher's description of his reform technique: "When I saw a rattlesnake in my path I would smite it," quoth he. In what manner did the mighty Lyman Beecher smite? "I talked to my deacons about it, and with my people, and roused public feeling."[1] Washington Gladden was to hammer away at a later generation with the axiom that there must be deeds and not just talk and feeling. But Gladden's own great contribution was actually nothing much aside from arousing feeling through words. It must not be forgotten that Lyman Beecher was no mean rouser of feeling, and the people he roused generally did a good deal of acting.

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1. Lyman Beecher, quoted in Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 168.

The Strategy of Revivals and the Strategy of Reform

Revivals and voluntary reform societies. To Finney's mind the whole success of the strategy of reform depended upon progress in revivals. This was partly because he was convinced that no man can possibly be benevolent unless he is first converted -- and preferably sanctified as well. The revival itself, we have seen, was a necessary step in the series of particular actions which made up the total strategy. Conversion was the high-water mark of the whole battle, although of no avail if not followed up by pressing the advantage until sanctification was secured. After that, what remained was a mere mopping-up operation.

The attempt to reform the whole of American society was carried out through a series of steps producing several successive waves of new organizations over the years. These waves are enumerated for us by Cole, and we can fill in the picture with little difficulty.[1]

The first phase of the action was a continuing one. Its function in the strategy was recruitment for the organized drive, although it was not to be thought of in that way but as of first importance for its own sake. This, of course, was the business of promoting

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1. Cole, ibid. , p. 102.

revivals on a wider and wider scale. Here religious zeal was fanned to white heat, and the potential army greatly enlarged. The character of the Christianity about which the revival centered was conceived in terms making its expression in benevolent activity indispensible to the validation of the conversion. The whole organization-consciousness of the culture and the fact that the revival campaign was itself a highly organized effort made it natural that the benevolent activity of the revived be implemented by creating new organizations, inclined this action to seek organizational embodiment.

The first wave of organizations flowed naturally from what was uppermost in the immediate feelings of men newly reborn to unselfish love and concern for the neighbor. The normal impulse is to tell and convince others. First came home-missions societies in the local community often separate from the church but fed by local church-life. These then spread upward to become national organizations. Closely following were similar local, regional and national societies for foreign missions.

The next wave was the organization of Bible and tract societies. These serviced a natural need of the preceeding missionary impulse, and also moved into

the area of propaganda servicing the reform movement. These organizations also might be distinct from the church. They had to be so in the case of reform propaganda, and in the other cases in their reaches above the local level. All were fed by local church life and fellowship, however.

The third wave was the organization of the local church itself into an activity church. Sunday schools, infant schools, maternal associations and prayer meetings were initiated and became enduring intra-church organizations. The prayer meeting was a vital adjunct both to revivals and to the reform effort. It also represented an attempt to achieve some continuity in between revival meetings and Sunday services. The rest of the activities were devoted primarily to the training and religious education of the younger generation, that it might be ready for religion and reform when its turn came. The child must be taught religious and moral truths if he is eventually to be persuaded to accept them when he becomes old enough to understand fully. Actually, there was more of Christian nurture in Finney's own church in these efforts -- in assumption and practice -- than Finney's theory could admit:

> It is expected that the children of Pagans will be idolators; those of Mohametans will trust in the Koran, and among professed Christians, it is nominally seen that children imbibe the sentiment, and become strongly in favor of the particular sect to which their parents are attached. We have only to carry the principle out then a little more minutely into the continued everyday influence of a mother, and we have the same result --- Mr. Judson proceeded to show, that God has given the plastic material into the hands of a mother,

> bidding her impress upon it her own image, and if it proves a vessel of dishonor; of her is required the forfeit. If one of honor, "meet for the master's use" hers is the rich reward.[1]

Finney's idea of the church is reflected, we should note, in the mental habit of regarding even those organizations as somehow distinct from the church itself.

"The habit of joining societies now well established, the fourth step included the various attempts at moral reform, at eliminating vice, licentiousness, juvenile delinquency, and the like. Finally, the last stage was the development on the national scale of the great humanitarian crusades such as temperance, peace and antislavery." Thus is the culmination of the process described by Cole.[2]

The revival played a role in this strategy beyond that of providing its first step and driving power. Large features of the revival technique were appropriated as methods of effecting the progressive organization of society for reform. One can scarcely miss the similarity to the protracted meeting and the step by step process of rational argument and aroused sentiments employed by the Finneyite evangelist in his revivals, even where the transferrance of techniques was not as direct as in Weld's case.

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1. Report of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Judson, The Oberlin Maternal Association, M.S. Minutes, September 25, 1844, (Finney Papers).

2. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 102.

Lyman Beecher's strategy. An earlier version of the grand strategy of reform was set forth by Lyman Beecher in his little book, A Reformation of Morals Practicable and Indispensible, written in 1814 before the Connecticut disestablishment. It is particularly illustrative of the pattern of the church working through the state. On the other hand, the extent of its departure from reliance upon the state's action is significant. One can already see at this date why Beecher later had little trouble moving to primary reliance upon voluntary associations outside of church and state, once he had recovered from the shock of the defeat of the establishment.

The first step proposed by Beecher is to call public attention to the evil at large. Next, effort is to be turned toward improving Christians -- "the better part of the community."[1] Beecher means the latter phrase in both of the two possible senses. He unconsciously tended to identify this group with the social strata from the middle class on up. The next order of business is attention to "the religious educa-

1. Lyman Beecher, A Reformation of Morals, p. 14.

tion of the rising generation,"[1] to train up a holier society to inherit the future. The final matter -- but one more important even than the provision for the youth -- is "the indispensible necessity of executing promptly the laws against immorality."[2]

He assumed the duty of the state to legislate morality. The state is the servant and the executor of the church in these matters. The primary problem at the time, to his mind, happened not to be legislation but enforcement. The state seemed to be too weak in this department for sufficient effectiveness, however.

Beecher therefore calls for "local voluntary associations of the wise and the good" to aid the magistrate in enforcement. They are to be a force "distinct from that of government, independent of popular suffrage, superior in potency to individual efforts ..." The real capability of these groups of vigilantes would be "to enlist and preserve the public opinion on the side of law and order." They could, "by the sermons, the reports, and the conversations they occasion, diffuse much moral instruction."[3]

Beecher also looked beyond this to the possi-

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 18.

bility of national societies:

> If beside these local associations, a more extended concert could be formed of wise and good men, to devise ways and means of suppressing vice and guarding the public morals; to collect facts and extend information, and in a thousand nameless ways exert a salutory, general influence; it would seem to complete a system of exertion, which we might hope, would retrieve what we have lost, and perpetuate forever our civil and religious institutions.[1]

Beecher was ready to lead in the grand strategy as it later took shape.

The achievement of a "benevolent empire" of reform societies. The results of the grand strategy were as dramatic as the wave of the Great Revivals themselves. "So powerful did these various societies become that by 1834 the total annual receipts of the benevolent societies equaled some nine million dollars."[2] More than that, they were thoroughly interlaced in membership and were correlated in objectives and viewpoint on social matters to a remarkable extent.

It amounted to a vast unitive "benevolent empire," in the words of Gilbert H. Barnes.[3] The annual meetings of the national societies were called "anniversaries," and met in the same city -- generally New York -- and

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1. Ibid., p. 19.

2. Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 102 f.

3. Gilbert H. Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse (New York and London, 1933), p. 18.

at the same time -- generally May. Members might attend a number in one day; by 1839 sixteen met annually in New York. The controlling personalities were the same in most of them:

> This interconnection cannot be overemphasized ... Men like the Tappan brothers, Gerrit Smith, William Jay, Anson Phelps, and others controlled through a series of "interlocking directorates" the policies and activities of the major societies for the promotion of moral reform, and as Barnes has indicated, this movement was dominated by New School Presbyterians, leaders in the 1830 revivals. This group, who listened to Finney, followed his preaching and supported the vast network of local groups and national societies influenced immeasurably the course of moral reform in the ante-bellum era.
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> One of the first things this group of wealthy businessmen did in the cause of reform was to help establish in New York a weekly paper of their own. A crusade needs a sounding board to publish its views. Finney and Finney's followers had found the columns of the orthodox religious journals closed to them. To defend the new measures, disseminate news about revivals, and seek support for the rising reform societies, there was founded the New York Evangelist, which later under Joshua Leavitt's editorship had such a stormy career.[1]

The results were much like those of the Great Revivals themselves. The great benevolent empire of reform societies, like all things mortal, was transitory. Increasingly in the later years the whole reform movement was swallowed up in the biggest drive of all, the anti-slavery crusade. After the Civil War, there were few left. Yet despite the inevitable evaporation of the

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1. Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 103 f.

societies they made an incalculable impact upon the first half of the nineteenth century during the time when they were at work. Like the revivals, they also left a legacy which persists in many a way to the present day. The Great Reforms can hardly be overestimated in their contribution to the later Social Gospel movement.

The Idea of the Church and the Finneyite Social Strategy

Finney's unconciousness of the relationship of church and social strategy. There is truth behind the conviction held by Finney and his fellow evangelists that American democratic ideas and the genius of American social and governmental institutions owed their existence to Protestant Christianity. There is far more truth on the other side of the question than these men realized. The naivete of their assumption lay particularly in the uncomplicated manner in which they often supposed American institutions to have sprung full-blown from the Bible. The problem of the relation of their particular social strategy to their idea of the church poses a parallel problem. It is perhaps an easier problem, however; for we shall not be tempted to claim that the whole strategy was drawn straight out of the idea of the church.

These men took the church so much for granted

that they did not do much thinking about its nature. They relied upon it more than they knew, worked in and for it, and expressed their alarms about the future of Christianity in America in terms of the future existence of the church often enough. They did not see anything wrong with the understanding of the church's nature as it was commonly assumed, on the whole. What occupied their attention was new theological ideas about the process of salvation. The new ideas seemed to them compatible enough with the ecclesiological framework of the past. The incompatibility of the new ideas with some of the old was recognized. The place of those same old doctrines as main girders in the ecclesiological structure was not recognized.

The inconsistencies inherent in Finney's idea of the church were another factor tending to prevent him from conceiving of an open and conscious relationship between his ideas of the church and his social strategy. Relationships among ideas, however, are not always a matter of conscious intent upon the part of the holder or of historical causation of one idea by another. There remain some connections which we can discern linking Finney's thinking about the nature and function of the church with his social strategy. Indeed we found it impossible to describe his idea of the church without

including significant parts of his social strategy in our discussion because the theoretically separated functions of the two are actually so interdependent.

The identity of the substance of church and reform movement. For Finney the church centers in a holy koinonia of men sanctified in a loving ministry to the soul of the insider, and even more of the outsider. The ministry of the koinonia takes highly organized forms within the institution of the church and outside it. Both inside the church and outside, the organizations are thoughtful and deliberate mechanisms, in Gladden's sense of the term. In both cases they are a voluntary association of individuals like the koinonia itself is. In each case the association of individuals in being organized is thereby drawn together into a tightly-knit fraternity. These individuals are deeply bound together by a tremendous religious zeal and by common moral evaluations and objectives of collective action. Without such organizations, however, revivalism had no means of perpetuating this bond. Herein lies the unity of both the activity church and the reform-society.

The distinction between the two is actually no more than one of role. The same koinonia is the living substance of both the church and the reform movement in Finney's continually disclosed assumption. The co-operat-

ing non-Christian was nominally welcome to join the reform society and he was not welcome to join the church without a conversion. Little can actually be made of this difference, however. When it came to recruiting individuals into the reform movement, Finney thought of it entirely in terms of the avenues of conversion. It was not really possible for him to think that there could be cold sinners or dead Christians who would come forth to dedicate themselves to moral reform without being revived first. If such persons came to society meetings, such persons also came to revival meetings in church buildings, and coming into one of these societies would surely be little different in its impact upon them from coming into a revival.

Localism in the church and national reform societies. One striking point of disjunction in the practical identity of the church and the reform society is Finney's radical localism in church polity as contrasted with the ready acceptance of trans-local organization and control in reform organizations. Religion itself was an individualizing factor in Finney's makeup. Yet the dissimilarity is perhaps not so strange on a second look. The revivals in which the church centered were not localized phenomena, despite their considerable variation from one locale to another. Their unity and growth to

national scope was furthermore constantly assumed by those who conducted them.

Finney's extreme localism in thinking about what he spoke of as the church may have been largely a matter determined by the peculiarities of his theological situation. He was not received at the trans-local levels of the existing denominations as he was at the upper levels of the reform societies which had been spurred to such a great extent by his own ideas. His theology was not ecumenical, but his following was certainly inter-denominational. He had no interest in forming a new denomination; there were other, far more pressing matters to which to attend. These enterprises were not at all hampered, to his mind, by lack of an official ecclesiastical setting.

He could therefore be expected to settle for the reduction of the church in his theory to the aggregation of the numerous free local churches throughout the country. These were bound together by the only bond they needed in his opinion -- the Spirit of God at work in the Great Revivals. Individually, each local revival center was a holy <u>koinonia;</u> collectively they amounted to a great mass <u>koinonia.</u> Once again, the pattern is revivalism's peculiar "mass individualism." Had his reform strategy been persued through the internal channels of the local church instead of distinguished from them,

Finney might well have been one of the most willing advocates of the existence and importance of higher levels of church organization and authority. As it was, if salvation itself is but loosely channeled through internal church-life and order, why should reform be channeled there?

Voluntarism and institutional pluralism in the relation of church to society. The pattern of Finney's thought runs toward that of a koinonial-Christian sect in practical control of the society from which it is institutionally separate. The members of the brotherhood number a decisive majority in the nation, it is assumed -- or will, as soon as the dead Christians in the church are revived. Majorities don't make right, but in America the right will make a majority. They will be able to control the state and the moral climate of opinion in the social body through their standing as prominent citizens and their votes in the democratic process. The principle of institutional pluralism and voluntarism in the social process is assumed by Finney. Its acceptance provides the form for the visible bodies -- churchly and secular -- servicing the process of salvation. This assumption is consistent with Finney's conception of the process of salvation. The process of salvation is broken up into compartments. Conversion is primarily in society outside the church.

It is serviced by the church, and sometimes takes place within it. Sanctification is located primarily within the church. It could hardly take place, however, if it were not also located in the reform activity which takes place separately from the church.

The whole process of salvation might have been understood as taking place both within and outside of the church and still have been seen as rooted within the church as its primary locus. Instead, the characteristic primary locus of the process, in Finney's view, jumps from outside the church to inside it with the passing over the divide between conversion and sanctification. One cannot discern any inherent reason for this on Finney's theological grounds, unless it be his tendency to relegate conversion itself to the status of "preparation for salvation". The two parts of the process are not regarded as different in kind. The result is a confusion as to what the church's own particular role in the process of salvation ought to be.

The strategy for social reform is kept from a similar kind of confusion only by consistently separating it from the church institutionally, and by giving it no explicit theological basis despite the necessity of a tacit one. The identity of the personnel enables the social strategy to draw whatever resources it needs

from the church without any rationale for the manner of doing so being supplied from the side of the idea of the church. All that is needed from the church's side is the affirmation that the basis of entry into the church be inseparably tied to the impulse to serve.

The voluntary character of the primary instrument of social strategy reflects the voluntary character of the church itself. Both associations are rooted in free, voluntary choice by the individual of the salvation which is provided for him by God and is persuasively advocated by the Holy Spirit through the evangelist. It is assumed that the power of self determination is possessed by society. In Finney's case, this assumption follows from his conception of society as an aggregation of free individuals plus his conception of the sovereign law of God. To this law each individual must decide to conform if society is to be conformed to God's law and be governed by it. The government of society by the law of God can be achieved in large part by securing its adoption as a personal law by the majority of individuals in a democracy. It can only be achieved fully by its adoption by every individual, because of the problem of enforcing laws that have been instated.

Perfection of the church and transformation of the world by reviving individuals. That it can be achieved, Finney is certain. The way is the same way in which it becomes the visible pattern of perfection ruling the church. In the reform of both the church and society the strategy is based upon securing individual decisions to accept the truth and obey the laws. This will be accomplished by using the new measures in revivals. That, in turn will lead to there being more Christians to employ the new measures to bring in more Christians. The whole process soon will have swept the nation and turned it into a holy koinonia which is here the church and there society, acting in both capacities under the law of God. One individual's conversion may set off a great revival and fill the church with a restored membership. Even in the same way, one region's conversion will set off a chain reaction ending in a restored nation and a restored world.

One evangelist wrote to Finney: "I want to see our State evangelized. Suppose the great State of New York in its physical, political, moral, commercial and pecuniary resources should come over to the Lord's side. Why it would turn the scale and could convert the world.... I shall have no rest till it is done."[1]

1. M. Hunter to Charles G. Finney, June 7, 1828 (Finney Papers).

CHAPTER X

BUSHNELL: CHRISTIAN NURTURE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE ORGANIC CHURCH

The Social Issues and Their Solution According to Bushnell

The issues as Bushnell saw them were as much less a matter of particular evils than in Finney's view, as Bushnell's understanding of sin itself was less particularistic than Finney's. For Bushnell, the great problems of society were to be seen as cohering in broad cultural trends and movements contending for the corporate will of the national body. We shall follow the list of these broad issues as he saw them which he provided in his 1835 sermon, Crisis of the Church.

Infidelity and Radicalism

The threat to Christian America. Bushnell shared the view of his contemporaries in the clergy of our theological stream -- and of many outside it as well, -- concerning the Christian origin of American governmental institutions. A revealing difference, in the light of what we have seen about the place of the church in Bushnell's scheme of salvation, is that he did not refer this pattern to the Bible by direct transfer, as did even Lyman Beecher, but to the church:

> The whole framework of these free states, in short, and of this free nation, is drawn out of the bosom of the church; or rather it is the framework of the church itself. It was Protestantism, in religion, producing republicanism in government.[1]

That framework had grown and changed in form through a long process of forming and reforming since New Testament times. The infusion of society by infidelity will reverse the process whereby Christianity has formed American society. There is no social "entire sanctification" for Bushnell. The stability of the natural cohesive bond of human community depends upon the sanctification of its organic ties by the grace of Christ incarnated in the corporate and individual will. Without that, the organic social ties breed destructive wrath among the members and produce disintegration. If infidelity makes considerable inroads upon the populace, therefore, the social structure will crumble.[2]

The answer is for Christians to live as the embodiment of their faith and the dispositions of character produced by that faith when it rules the will with a steady hand. They are to meet infidelism's "rage against a God" with "an ever-happy love of God," rather than trying to prove by rational argument that He exists.[3] The secular radicals of the time struck Bushnell as much as Finney as men whose personal morality and integrity was reprehensible,

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1. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 32. Cf. Politics Under the Law of God, pp. 12-15.

3. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 32.

and whose religious orientation was generally infidelistic. The Christian body in society is to meet the "impurity" of these men by seeing to its own "purity."[1]

Equalitarianism. The radical equalitarianism of this opposing movement is not to be totally disregarded, however. This notion is a naive oversimplification of the Christian theme of mutual concern and care for one another in body as well as in soul, tracing back to the first days of the church and the sharing of goods after Pentecost:

> . . . the springtime, or first blossoming of the Christian love . . . . has fallen upon them, and they find, what is altogether new and strange, that rich and poor, honorable and base, despite of all distinctions, they love one another as brethren! Not knowing what to make of it, or apparently, whether they are hereafter to have anything to do but love one another, they give themselves wholly up to love as children to a play -- come what will, they are agreed in this, that they want only fellowship with each other, fellowship in doctrine, fellowship in praise, fellowship in bread, and why not also in goods?
>
> How sad, that a scene so amiable and lovely could not continue, and that all Christian disciples, to the end of the world, could not fall into the same delightful picture in their conduct! Just as sad, I answer, as it is that children cannot always be children . . . . Doubtless we are to regret, as a loss, whatever departure we may have suffered from the spirit of these first disciples; for the spirit of Christian life is one and the same, in all diversities of form and conduct.[2]

Even then, Christians must soon have learned that this cannot continue for long:

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1. Ibid.

2. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 127.

> They are pilgrims at the feasts; Parthians, Medes, Elamites -- Jewish emigrants. . . . Their property, their business, and, more commonly, their families, are left behind. Many of them are poor persons, wholly unable to support the expense of even a short stay at Jerusalem. The others can not, of course, leave them to suffer. So they divide their resources with the poor; and some, who belong at Jerusalem, are moved by the overflowing love of Christ in their hearts, to part with their whole property, that they may relieve the necessities of the brotherhood. Only a few days or weeks are thus spent together. Probably, within three months, they are, every man, at home in his own house, providing for his own family, out of the increase of his own industry and property. . . . the ordinary has returned. By this time, they have learned probably, and received it even as a Christian maxim, that one who does not provide for his own, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel.[1]

Radicalism's "hatred of distinctions" is to be met not by the self-righteous defense of existing distinctions in the name of God's predestination or laws, but by Christian "admission of only the distinction of moral worth" as the criterion of admission to our favor:

> No man will rail at such distinctions. But if we will be proud of our family or estate, in violation of the very first principles of Christian simplicity and love, if we compel the worthy, when they rise, to break through our pride and contempt, as well as the natural impediments of poverty and a low education, we need not complain of that rabid infidelity which would pluck down all distinctions of property and caste. We make it for ourselves -- it is the product of our own vanity.[2]

"Under the selfish and diseased action of society and capital" it is no wonder that labor is discontent![3] This is the forerunner of Washington Gladden speaking.

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1. Ibid., p. 134 f.

2. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 32.

3. Horace Bushnell, "Life, or the Lives," in Work and Play (New York, 1864), p. 299.

Bushnell's antipathy toward radical Jacksonian democrats and secular reformers was rooted in part in the tendency of so many of them to be highly anti-clerical and anti-church, and personally agnostic. He understood that there was provocation for their attitude toward religion and its institutions, but the provocation did not seem to him proportionate to the response by any means. He concluded that there were also deeper reasons for the tendency than simple humanitarian concern for their fellow man.

This antipathy had another root, however, which cannot be left out of account. He did not consider poverty a reliable sign of vice, but he did judge that the latter, when it is present, often causes the former. Above all, it was plain to him that virtue in the spiritual realm produces fruits in the physical realm -- including the economic. The Pentecostal enthusiasts must soon have seen what was so plain to Bushnell: the importance of the Puritan economic virtues of thrift and industry.

> But we, at least, have learned what they must also have learned very soon, that though we cannot live by bread alone, it is yet difficult to live without bread. We have learned that the very church of God itself is perpetuated, in part, by industry and production, that it cannot live by expenditure, that we have something therefore to do, besides breaking bread from house to house; six days to labor, a spectacle of thrift to present to mankind, as a proof that Christian virtue has its blessings. We must shine as good citizens, neighbors, parents, friends. Life is no mere camp-meeting scene . . . the greatest of all Christian attainments, we find, is . . . the learning how to

> blend the spiritual and economical or industrial together; to live in the world, and not be of it; to labor in earthly things, and maintain a conversation in heaven; to unite thrift with charity, and separate gain from greediness; to use property, and not worship it; to prepare comfort, without persuing pleasure. For it is, by just this kind of trial, that all spiritual strength is gotten, and the Christian life becomes a light to men.[1]

We must recall in this connection the importance to him of the economic side of "the power that is to send the gospel through the world."[2] When Hartford suffered a business crisis he lectured the good Christian gentlemen of the merchant community on this reason for his maxim: "Prosperity Our Duty."[3]

Political compromise. These economic leanings were far less determinative of his attitude, however, than was his consistent insistence upon the government of the national will by the divine law of right. This is the meaning of the title, and is the thesis, of Popular Government By Divine Right.[4] Political matters were to be decided by reference to principles rather than by expediency and compromise, as for Finney.

Bushnell insisted that "the position of duty is that of power!"[5] He nevertheless agreed with Finney against N.W. Taylor that a Christian cannot in good conscience help to elect a duellist or an oppressor of the poor.[6]

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 135.

2. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 13.

3. Bushnell, Prosperity Our Duty (Hartford, 1847).

4. Bushnell, Popular Government By Divine Right (Hartford, 1864).

5. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 33.

6. Bushnell, "Reply to Dr. Taylor" signed "Constans." Letter published in The Christian Freeman (Hartford) Dec. 12, 1844. 4 columns.

If those are the only two alternatives presented to him, he should abstain: "A vote is by no means thrown away because it does not go into the balance of the main question." The only right action is to "Give it in as a visible token of innocence and incorruptible principle -- a piece of clean, white paper."[1] Bushnell did explain, however, why he considered this a use of political power rather than an abdication of it. Christians are to let their political unity as a block of voters be known in this way and in others. All those pieces of white paper are to say to the politician that they can be his if he will measure up to the moral requirements.

Ultraism. Perhaps most significant regarding his attitude toward the radicals was his opposition to the ultraism of the age. He saw that temper as rooted in the religious and civil individualism of the period, it will be recalled. Furthermore, Bushnell was a mediator who liked to locate the center from which his own radical mediation operated on the orthodox side of the dividing line. He was far more warm and understanding toward his opponents than was Finney. We have only to compare Bushnell's warm personal friendship with his able theological opponent, the Unitarian Theodore Parker, with Finney's pious horror of Universalists -- at

1. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God, pp. 17 f.

whom he railed as though they were the forces of Satan himself.[1] Also noteworthy was Bushnell's antislavery zeal despite his determined opposition to Garrison. He preached his first published sermon, The Crisis of the Church, in response to the mobbing of Garrison in Boston, berating the views of those who beset Garrison and supporting the necessity of ultimate abolition as the only solution.[2]

Roman Catholic Political Power

The problem. Bushnell noted with alarm the powerful political influence of the Roman priesthood because of its authoritarian hold over its parishioners and the consequent tendency of politicians to court their favor.[3] His was a time of generally high anti-Catholicism among both the clergy and the laity of American Protestantism.[4] There was a Puritan legacy of sensitivity on the point, of course.

This sensitivity was renewed by the growth of the Catholic voting populace through immigration, especially into the industrial cities of the Eastern seaboard. The feeling of alarm was openly held, however, and theologically based -- unlike much present day political anti-Catholicism. To Bushnell, the alliance of the authoritarian Roman Church

1. Edwin D. Mead, Horace Bushnell, The Citizen, (Boston, 1900), pp. 1, 18.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 25.

4. For a detailed discussion of this movement and its development, see Bodo, Protestant Clergy, chap. iii.

with opportunistic vote-seeking politicians threatened America with the possibility of slipping into a political tyrrany of European style. It will be remembered how important he felt democracy to be to the transformation of the world through the coming great church-state in America.[1]

He recognized that the "system of our political canvassing" will inevitably force the politician to seek the favor of the press and the interest groups which can deliver votes and politicians will have to deliver some concessions in return.[2] With the recognition there eventually came a certain reserve about the whole idea of popular election of national leadership. He was able to accept it as a valid instrument only if it resulted in the rule of moral principle in policy-making. Not only is law invalid which conflicts with divine law, but no law is valid unless it is felt to express the divine law.[3] Popular elections, especially during his own lifetime, he felt, were hindered in achieving any such end by the nature of the political party and the campaigning system. "The world is filled with contention and tumult," he wrote to a friend in 1827," not to determine what, but who, shall govern."[4] This was a long-standing conviction on Bushnell's part.

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1. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, pp. 10 f.

2. Ibid., pp. 24, 26.

3. Horace Bushnell, Reverses Needed (Hartford, 1861) p. 18.

4. Horace Bushnell to Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, Dec. 23, 1827, in Cheney, op. cit., p. 49.

This condition is contrary to the right kind of morality in politics. The importance of democracy was not abandoned as Bushnell's views matured, but it became more clearly a matter of historical relativity. There are other ways of determining leadership than popular suffrage, including the succession of blood. Both are "equally good and right when the historic order makes them so."[1] He does not argue with Rome about the necessity of absolute rule by God's law, but against the idea that any human power, including the church itself is the infallible interpreter of that law. There must be no human political absolutism. "This is the spirit of the Puritan Fathers in New England, who were not, in fact, or in their own view, republicans in their idea of government."[2] Policy determination must be absolutely guided by principles conforming to the divine law of right rather than by power-balance and compromise. The parallel to the government of the will in the individual is obvious.

The remedy. The plan of action which Bushnell proposes as a Christian solution accepts provisionally the immoral realities of politics, however, and seeks to make them serviceable to right principles. He does not call for a Christian party in politics. What is needed instead is a decisive block of

1. Bushnell, Reverses Needed, pp. 17 f.

2. Horace Bushnell, "The Founders Great in their Unconsciousness," address to the New England Society of New York on Forefathers Day, 1849. Published as The Fathers of New England (New York, 1850), pp. 17 f.

votes held in independency from political parties, ready to be swung behind any candidate who is morally immaculate and reserved for the appearance of such a man:

> That corrupt alliance . . .. which will naturally subsist between the worst of our politicians and the priests of Romanism, must be checked and counteracted. To this end the Church, comprising all who love our Lord Jesus Christ of whatever name, ought at once to resolve itself into a great Balancing Power, retiring from every alliance with party, and holding its forces ready to support the best men. The Church will take her position then as it were on a lofty eminence. Below will ever be ambition assorting her factions and combining her forces. Now it will be seen that Rome is no longer to be courted, but virtue. Such candidates must now be offered as will propitiate that tremendous power, which is to come down at the election, and turn the scale which ever way it please. What right has the follower of Christ to become the follower of a party? And how clearly do we see in this case, what is an universal truth, that the position of duty is that of power! Nor let the Church lose a moment in occupying this ground. Here she may stand for ages, and steady the nation in its worst emergencies and give it a wholesome and salutary government.[1]

Antislavery and "Our Political Tendencies"

Social contract theories. The issue of slavery was the occasion for Bushnell's development of his previous convictions against the compromise of principles and for firmness in the right operating within a framework of transforming experiential mediation.[2] It also saw the development of his polemic against social-compact theories of government. These he saw as rooted in individualism rather than in the true, organic understanding

1. Bushnell, Crisis of the Church, p. 33.

2. Edwin Mead, Bushnell the Citizen, p. 15.

of the nature of society.[1] These contractual theories wrongly assume that we calculatingly surrender half of our natural liberties to preserve the other half. In actuality, we would have no natural liberties without being born into a framework of governmental determinations made for the whole body, as the child does not acquire a free will except through participating in parental determinations made for him without his consent. Such a framework then protects liberty and increases it.[2]

Bushnell saw these contractual theories as a deep root of America's political troubles. In part this is a legacy from the American Revolutionary Fathers. Their revolt from England was not wrong. In fact, this was not really a rebellion against constituted governmental authorities at all, to Bushnell's mind, but rather history's first instance of a "separation by specific gravity." The parting was inevitable because of the sufficiency of American resources to serve as a basis for an independent nation, and its inevitable growth toward a far greater weight than the parent country.[3] Not

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1. Bushnell's polemic against social contract theories was developed during the Civil War but was also expressed in his earlier writings. See Christian Nurture, p. 96: "Now, it was by just this kind of sophistry that Mr. Jefferson proved that a public debt is obligatory for only one generation....we all do tacitly assume the organic unity of nations." See also Politics Under the Law of God (1844), p. 10.

2. Bushnell, "Life, or the Lives," in Work and Play, p. 298. Cf. Bushnell, Reverses Needed, p. 16.

3. Bushnell, Popular Government by Divine Right, pp. 5 f.

being able to admit that revolution is ever constructive, nor to admit that the American Revolution was a poor idea, Bushnell had to claim that it was not a revolution.

The mistake made at the beginning of national existence -- the National original sin -- was the character of the theories by which the Revolutionary War was justified by American leaders. Traces of social-contract theory found their way through the social philosophy and the deism of some of these men and their mentors -- notably Jefferson, Locke and Rousseau.[1] The result was effective in the revolutionary cause, but left America with an unsolved and continuing problem. In setting up the new government the basis of national unity was never settled. The issue has recurred ever since and finally has torn the Nation in two. The application of this point to state's rights, the threat of Southern secession and the Civil War was obvious in the wisdom of hindsight. Bushnell had foreseen it vaguely at the time when he first began to plead for moderation in approaching the Southern conscience about abolition.

The slavery problem. Bushnell came early to regard the slavery issue as "the curse of this nation," which threatened to crumble the whole social structure.[2] The largest matter was the corrosive

1. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God, pp. 10 f; Reverses Needed, p. 16.

2. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God, p. 18.

effect of tolerating such a flagrant moral injustice. The impossibility of the slave living a truly human life under the family, educational and religious conditions which the system itself forced, through the weakness and sin of even good men, was the primary consideration in judging the issue. There are kindly slaveholders, as well as cruel ones, but even they are up against a system which the personal morality of the individual -- helpful as it is -- cannot adequately chasten. Economic pressures in hard times may make it impossible to keep one's slaves, for instance, and when the seller is compelled to sell he cannot always choose the buyer. Slaves will go to hard masters and immoral ones, and slave families will be separated despite his good intentions.[1]

The remedy. The solution must come by steps rather than all at once. The first step is for the nation as a whole people to be made aware of the unprincipled nature of the whole political trend of the day, recognize the range of the moral evil in which everyone is involved -- slaveholder and non-slaveholder as well -- and "repent of it with shame and fasting." The second step is the moral attack upon the corrupt and expediential politicians. Conscience must be restored to public office by a repentant national majority

1. See Charles C. Cole, Jr., "Horace Bushnell and the Slavery Question," the New England Quarterly, XXIII, No. 1 (1950), 19-30. Also Bushnell, A Discourse on the Slavery Question, (Hartford, 1839).

choosing only the wholly virtuous in elections. The stage will then be set for the final step -- doing away with the institution of slavery itself.[1]

Attack against political compromise. The evils of the political trend included the Missouri compromise, which he attacked passionately in his 1844 sermon, Politics Under the Law of God, at the height of Clay's campaign against Polk. It immediately was adopted as a political tract. He denied that it was an attack upon Clay, but his words speak for themselves:

> The man who was foremost in that transaction, who therein took upon his soul the sorrows of untold millions of bondmen, and the moral desolation of the fairest portion of the globe, the nation follows with its warmest plaudits, and the promise of its highest honors.[2]

Such features in the conduct of the government's slavery policy cannot be separated from the prevalence of the compromising and expediential spirit at every level of politics, Bushnell felt. He attacked the spoils system in another election-year sermon, American Politics (1840). Its fault was turning out honest and able men for the sake of partizan political aims and ambitions. Needless to say, Bushnell did not consider patronage to be either right or necessary. Both of these sermons were preached by Bushnell as a minister and in a situation within regular church life

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1. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God, pp. 15-19.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

and order. He habitually ordered all parts of his church services about one central theme for each occasion. Both of the sermons mentioned above exerted a considerable national political impact, according to commonly expressed judgment.

In American Politics, Bushnell related his role as a minister to this kind of specific political pronouncement from the pulpit:

> I claim no right to meddle, in this place, with any political question, whether in regard to men or measures; unless, perhaps, measures may be attempted which are against the fundamental principles of morality and virtue. That I have no preference of feeling between the two great parties which now divide the nation, I certainly do not pretend. I have as good right to such a preference as any other citizen, and shall exercise it as freely. But, as a minister of religion, it is my duty, and I claim also the ability, to speak of both or either of these great parties as the principles of truth and religion require. I am here no more a citizen, but an official advocate or teacher of the laws of God. And in this character, it is my duty to search out what is morally corrupt or dangerous, and expose it wherever it may be found; to assert the laws of God, and do what I can to establish their sober influence over men -- not everywhere, save just here in the domain of politics, but in every sphere and department of action into which they go. If, in the discharge of such a duty, what I ought to say infringes upon one or both of your parties, it shall give me no concern. It is not I that say it, but the truth, and truth is impassible to whatsoever blame you may cast upon her.[1]

A change in the laws. Reform will require the changing of the law of the land as well as the awakening of the public conscience,

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1. Bushnell, "American Politics," p. 191.

especially in the case of slavery. There is no reason why a Christian should not work actively to secure the repeal of a law which is contrary to the divine law of right -- even if it originally was in conformity to that law:

> . . .no reform is bad, because it requires a revision of law; for the change of conditions, wrought by time, may be so great as to render the former law inapplicable. It is conceivable that even a positive statute of revelation may lose its applicability by reason of a radical change in the circumstances it was designed to cover.[1]

Mediation in antislavery. While it is a duty of the nation to change the law to bring it into accord with the requirements of justice and love, the change leading up to that point may take a while. The defense of principle does not require the Christian to salve his own conscience at the expense of driving other men away from conscientious recognition of the right by subjecting them to self-righteous blasts of condemnation. Bushnell, like Finney, pleaded for a gradual immediatism much the same as that advocated by Weld, and opposed the radical immediatism and primacy of interest in denunciation represented by Garrison. His sermons and articles setting forth his arguments were influential in the antislavery drive, and he can be ranked as a real contributor.

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1. Bushnell, "The Growth of Law," in Work and Play, p. 100.

He did not join the Anti-Slavery Society, however. He felt that it tended to drive away rather than convert the Southerner -- who, after all was the strategic man to change.[1] Societies have a limited role anyway, as we have already noted. They are useful in giving the first impulse to reform, but success requires the assumption of the task as a moral duty by the controlling will of a whole people.[2] As public bodies -- even in such societies -- men tend to "yield to impulse, to party spirit and policy, without any consideration of moral constraints and principles. As public bodies they have no conscience."[3]

Preparation for corporate action in the matter of abolition is needed. This calls for personal missions by individual Christians, employing the natural contacts and associations of Northerners with Southerners in their travels. Within the common frame of reference of Christian faith and ethics within the church, a serious and thorough mutual exploration of the moral problem involved will eventuate in the concession of the immorality of the slave-system, in almost every case. Bushnell felt that his own experiences of exactly this sort with Southerners confirmed the wisdom and the effectiveness of the approach. From there the problem of bringing about abolition can proceed backed

1. Cole, "Horace Bushnell and the Slavery Question," loc. cit.

2. Supra, p. 245 f.

3. Bushnell, Politics Under the Law of God, p. 5.

by a united conscience and will in the nation. There is sufficient business travel by Christians between North and South to bring a sufficient number of natural contacts. The efforts of Southern Christians among their neighbors will be far more acceptable, and will greatly accelerate the process as it gathers momentum.[1]

Bushnell's counsel was not heeded by enough people to put it to a real test. Hotter sentiments prevailed. The rift deepened to a chasm too wide to hold out hope of reconciliation. The Southern position hardened into a divine justification of slavery in principle. Bushnell sorrowfully but resolutely backed the use of force by the Union in an address entitled The Northern Iron.[2]

Bushnell had other social concerns -- of amazing range. There was scarcely anything in which he did not take an interest and a hand. Both the new scientific trends in higher education and the movement for common schools (just another way of spelling democracy) received his supporting pen.[3] As we have already seen, the religious importance of general intellectual training had a clear theological basis in his views. The above will serve to indicate the major matters, however, and something of the range.

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1. Bushnell, Discourse on the Slavery Question (Hartford, 1839).

2. Horace Bushnell, The Northern Iron (Hartford, 1854).

3. See Edwin Mead, op. cit., p. 8.

The Church and Bushnell's Strategy For Social Transformation

A Strategy Centered in the Church-State

Christian comprehensiveness. The full dimensions of the comprehensive social strategy conceived by Bushnell hardly begin to appear in any resume of his specific social ideas and plans of action. The immediate program which he recommended was an important but subsidiary part of his larger strategy. He liked always to conceive the immediate issues in the light of long-term developments and trends of basic social policy extending far into the future -- indeed, too far at times.

The "Christian comprehensiveness" of his social vision, like that of his whole system of ideas is often admirable.[1] The length of his foresight, however, also involves him at times in the difficulties risked by any policy formulation which is projected so far in advance. Conditions which cannot possibly be foreseen are highly likely to arise and make such a policy irrelevant before it can bear much fruit. That Bushnell gave a good deal of attention to more proximate solutions was perhaps owing to a recognition of that likelihood. He once wrote, in another context, "I speak constructively, as reasoning from the doctrine asserted. . . . Constructive results

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1. See Bushnell, "Christian Comprehensiveness," in Building Eras.

are never more than partially verified by historic facts; for great truths, blended with . . . error, qualify and mitigate its effects."[1]

The role of the Church-State. The final comprehensiveness is only added to Bushnell's social thought when we bring his idea of the church-state into the picture. It is the real heart of his social strategy. The whole strategy depends directly upon the church as defined in terms of its internal organic connection with the whole social organism.

The primary action throughout the strategy is to be carried on inside the church. It is then to penetrate and transform society from that center, spreading through the rest of society only because it has the power first to transform the church. Its spread to redemptive action outside the church does not wait until the intra-churchly transformation is completed, however. It takes place throughout the duration of the process, and the process has begun already. The church-state already exists as the basic sub-stratum of the present churches, much as Puritanism's true church was seen by the non-separatists as existing in the Church of England, needing only to be drawn out.

Only at the point of the final culmination of the process is the strategic action no longer to be carried on simultaneously inside and outside the church. At that point

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 116.

the corporate communities of church and society will have become identical as real entities and there will be no outside to the church. It must be kept clear, however, which of the two corporate bodies is to transform the other:

> . . . of course it will not be supposed that I dare to anticipate any such consumation, on the ground of a mere natural progress in the race.[1]

The present action in and out of the church is of little worth apart from the context provided by the whole strategy. As a part of that whole, however, these tasks have the high priority belonging to those things which are the most important to do now if more important things are to be made possible. There are many particular things of such high importance to be done, calling for the individual contributions of courageous and able leaders. Witness to the law of right, intellectual clarification of moral principles, arousing of the sluggish Christian consciences of public bodies -- all these are significant duties upon which the success of the whole ultimate plan depends. Most of Bushnell's personal labor in the cause of the final, great transformation falls under exactly these categories of one-man activity.

The transformation of men by Christian nurture. His basic social strategy is one conceived for corporate execution, however. To this all individual action must be constantly directed. We may distinguish two broad

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1. Bushnell, "The Growth of Law" (1843), in Work and Play, p. 81.

phases through which the collective process is to pass. The first and basic step, as for the Finney reformers, is evangelism. This takes place through revivals and tides of spiritual awakening in the church, to some extent; but it proceeds primarily through the deeper process of Christian nurture. Men are to be brought into the church primarily by birth into Christian families or into the sphere of influence of Christian families. Conscious effort is required if this is to be effective. Many men would not be brought in were it not for the fostering of a better understanding of the nature of Christian nurture among churchmembers but instead would end up alienated from the community of faith. Some of these unfortunate men will eventually come in by way of adult conversion. Christian nurture instead of revivals, however, will be the really effective means of recruitment for Bushnell's army of social reformers. Christian nurture is the very life-process of the church itself. Because of its presence there, the church is to be understood as being:

> . . . Christianity, as a fixed institution, taking the whole society of man into its bosom, and becoming the school of the race. . . . What a variety of means, instruments and arrangements has it created, maintaining all from age to age, by a sacrifice . . .[1]

Evangelism by Christian nurture is nothing more nor less than the growth toward actualization of the great church-state and all that is involved in that growth as we

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1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 137 f.

have previously described it.[1] Bushnell's social strategy is given in entirity with the form of the divinely based plan for constituting the church-state. It is a living thing, empowered and formed by the redemptive Spirit of Christ in the church, yet also formed by the will of man and conceived by human minds. It is already present and growing in the actuality of the present churches as truly as the faith of the child of a Christian home is real before it finally comes to flower within his independent will.

Every stage of the growth of a christian society involves both enlargement and internal transformation. Each stage becomes a ground for a higher order of social possibilities which could not have been foreseen before the transformation last made. The words of Milton, Bushnell feels, express the whole matter perfectly:

> "Alas, sir!" exclaimed Milton --, "a commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body; for look, what the grounds and causes are of single happiness to one man, the same ye shall find them to a whole state."

Here, in a single sentence he declares the true idea of a state, and of all just administration.[2]

The out-populating power of the christian stock. The second broad phase of the great social transformation also has its immediate results, but they are all but

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1. Supra, pp. 241-253, 267-278.

2. Bushnell, "The True Wealth or Weal of Nations" (1837), in Work and Play, p. 60.

imperciptible during the first phase. The second phase comes to fruition as these imperceptible results accumulate and reinforce one another over a long period of time. His own notions of vitalistic evolution were much like those held by Spencer later on. Bushnell believed that moral and spiritual strength and health in a racial group or sub-group will strengthen inherited physical factors of a desirable sort and vice versa.[1] Increased righteousness within the church will result in a better and healthier race of men inside that community than exists outside it.

The root of this conviction was, of course, his faith in the interrelationship of the systems of nature and supernature under a moral God. Among the most important features of this increased physical vitality will be increased reproductive vitality and increased economic productivity by which the community will be capable of supporting more people. The result will ultimately be astounding. The community of the church will be found to increase itself much faster by Christian nurture than by reliance upon converting outsiders.[2] Here is Bushnell's final sensational claim for the superiority of Christian nurture over the most dramatic mass results the Great Revivals could hope to produce.

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1. Moral and physical abuse will, by the same token, have the opposite effect on the descendents of a group. See Bushnell, Christian Nurture, pp. 98 ff.

2. See Munger, Bushnell, p. 84.

Out of the "fund of increase within the very bosom of the church itself," Christianity is to increase fundamentally by multiplication rather than by addition. The Church is to possess the world not by conquest but by "the out-populating power of the Christian stock."[1]

Thus the role of the church in the grand social strategy is the whole active role and that of society as such is passive. The great church, however, could never become embodied in actuality did it not contain an effective social strategy as an integral part of its own internal nature. In its present, partial realization as the churches of today, the great nation-church gives meaning and direction to all particular social action.

Naive Science and Moral Pathology

Vitalistic evolution. Bushnell's vitalism is illustrated in its worst scientific naivete in his essay, "Life, or the Lives."[2] The part played by this naive science in his long-range expectation for his social strategy gives it an impossibly utopian air at some points.

The notion that acquired characteristics are capable of being passed on by inheritence was not an absurd theory in the light of the scientific evidence which was available in Bushnell's own time. It was still quite credible to many

1. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 10.

2. In Work and Play, chap. vii, p. 262-307.

in the form of Spencer's later theories. The effect of environment upon genetic factors is even today a somewhat unsettled problem. Bushnell's naivete is exhibited not in his holding such a notion but in giving it such prominence in his understanding of the divine strategy for the redemption of the world when so little scientific verification was at hand -- or even possible. He believed it because he felt he needed it. He succumbed to the liberal's irresistable temptation to bolster faith in God's power to work a sufficient salvation by calling upon another, surer faith: scientism. The tacit admission that outside support is needed was thus an unrecognized by-product of Bushnell's romantic union of nature with the supernatural.

This was also another manifestation of the fact that the anti-ultraist Bushnell shared a good deal of the ultraism in optimism current in his era. He took the theory quite seriously, despite his own admission in presenting it that its grounds were still highly speculative. Having accepted it as probable truth, he let the chips fall where they might in his loyalty to the truth as he understood it. Fortunately the basic insights upon which his social strategy rested were of more enduring validity than this extravagant facet of the plan, and preserve it from being today of merely antiquarian interest.

The implications of the inheritance theory posed a hard moral choice for Bushnell in the matter of freedom.

for the slaves. His response to that dilemma posed for his theory of non-compromise is revealing. He believed that the centuries of primitive culture and physical deprivation in the history of the enslaved people from the Dark Continent had produced tragic physical results in the stock. He believed that in all likelihood they would be placed at an insurmountable disadvantage when given their freedom in a vigorous and competitive society. Educational disadvantages could be overcome to some extent, expecially in the most gifted slaves. The stronger group in society would have to assume the duty of providing such education and of doing everything else that is possible to make the lot of the liberated slave a happy and fruitful one.

The one thing he feared could not be overcome in a short enough time to be of any help was the weakening of the power of the slave stock to propagate itself. Thus he believed it quite likely that in time even the ablest and strongest would fail to propagate sufficiently under the new and difficult competitive conditions of freedom. Eventually, the entire stock would probably disappear.[1]

Nevertheless, he stoutly affirmed that these men must be liberated because it is morally right as a matter of principle. He looked with some hope toward the plans of the Colonization Society, for this reason, among others.

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1. See Bushnell, Discourse on the Slavery Question.

In Africa, the liberated slaves might yet gain sufficient time to recover their lost future.[1] Most important as the criterion for supporting the rightness of abolition was the fact that, in any event, the individual slave would no longer be cut off from the process of Christian nurture under freedom, as he was so frequently under the family life enforced by the system of slavery.

Finally, we may note that Bushnell at least had a fuller awareness than many abolitionists that freedom was to be a blessing mixed with real hardships for the slave. He had the moral courage to hold for freedom anyway, when the choice was between two alternatives mixed with evil. One cannot help wondering whether he did not admit to himself that the choice involved sacrificing one good principle in order that a higher one might be put into action. He certainly had theological grounds which could support such a position.

The attack upon social ills as the production of a context favoring health. A second product of Bushnell's vitalism was of more enduring significance. His view of good and evil was essentially Augustinian. He looked at evil pathologically, under the analogy of disease and health.[2] Thus his strategy

1. Ibid.

2. This insight is most fully discussed in "Life or the Lives," in Work and Play.

for the purification of the church does not proceed by excision of the immoral, as with Finney. It works instead toward creating contextual conditions within the community of the church which favor health and growth. Christian nurture, of the level appropriate to the age and condition of the individual, is the truly effective weapon of the church for dealing with its own sickness.

The good physician does not amputate a limb that can be nursed back to health by painstaking medical care, however long it may take to do so. The doctor cannot empower and organize life and growth. That must be done by the life and health which is still in the body, and depends upon the activity of God's creating and sustaining Spirit. What the doctor does is to appeal to the health left in the body by setting artificially the conditions which will be most favorable to the growth and vitality of the invaded tissues. He actually treats the health of the body and encourages it with all the means at his command, rather than treating the disease. The latter is not a living entity in its own right, but a lack of right order and relationship which is parasitic on health.[1]

The excision of members from the body of the church under the illusion of removing the Devil does not lead to

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1. Ibid., passim. For the relation of this view to social-compact theories of government, see p. 298.

a holy church but to a maimed body. On the other hand, it will not be good strategy to ignore the disease and to graft diseased members to healthy ones indiscriminately. That will merely spread the infection to the more healthy parts in whom lies hope of recovery. No organic union with the Unitarians can be effected until the theological sickness is curbed and controlled both there and in orthodoxy. Before that time can come ways of mediatorial communication must be found whereby the healthy life-experience left in each body can minister to the disorders of the other.[1] In time this will bring unity to the church, and through it, unity will at last come to society:

> We have been split up . . . by many thousand debates trying to settle bases of unity by the settlement of opinions. But these notional points or entities breed, as we find, only sects and sub-divisions without end, and all our longings after the complete fellowship are disappointed. But when these nits of opinion are all hatched, these dissidences all worn out, and the "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all," begin to be felt as the uppermost fact and grandest faith, before which all opinions are to be schooled into their places, by that time we sink as it were in final gravitation downward on the state of unity.[2]

This principle is both a tactical and a strategic maxim, operating at every level. It applies to the body politic quite as much as to the body of Christ, since both are organic communities.

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1. See Supra, pp. 293 ff.

2. Bushnell, Building Eras, p. 26.

> It is not God's manner to work all remedies in things from without, but to make them largely self-remedial, when attacked by damage or disorder. . . . The same is true as regards all defections of honor or character. If the man himself does not return to himself, and repair his losses by a process of recovery undertaken by himself there is no recovery for him. The whole world toiling at his vices and dishonors, could not repair one of them. He alone has power to win the first inch of recovery. On a larger scale the same is true of society. Broken down by oppression, desolated by conquest, rent by faction, weakened by every sort of incapacity, it finally gets clear and rises, by reactions from within itself -- just as Italy is rising now. The national resurrection comes by man -- man, that is, grown manlier, as God prepared him to be, by his own great struggles of devotion.[1]

Between this principle's application to society and to the church, the only real difference is one which is of highest importance for strategic purposes. The body of Christ can effectively avail itself of the spiritual self-healing propensities inherent in every organic body. This is so because its corporate will is continually being restored by grace to the center of balance. It is therefore responsive to the guiding Spirit of Christ. The same is true of the social body not naturally but only to the extent that it has been pervaded by the church and has actually been transformed thereby into the body of Christ.

Here we find a very basic reason supporting Bushnell's opposition to radicalism and rebellion. The basic error of the radical and revolutionary reformers is in treating society as though it were a dead machine. They are guided

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1. Bushnell, "Salvation by Man," in Sermon's on Christ and His Salvation, pp. 272 f.

by "a wisdom that works only in the molds of force and mechanical repair," rather than that of the doctor, who "appeals to the life (the body) still has."[1] Such violent action will have an even more damaging result in society than excision has in the church because the body politic is not yet the church by any means and has not the same power to tolerate disruption without succumbing.

Bushnell's social methods based on christian nurture in the church offer a more effective strategy. Society can in this way "universally be pervaded by Christian virtue. The Christian scheme has a scope of intention, and instruments and powers adequate to this."[2] The intention is the Christian transformation of the individual, the family, the church, the nation and the world. It is the re-establishment of social rule by the principle of right through the gift of the new will which rules the church. The instrument is Christian nurture operating through the organic unity of the whole body of mankind and of all of its corporate units, including the church. The power is more than influence -- it is the power of Christ working in the community of the nation-church. Within such a community of divine and human will, the will of God works within and through the free human will as if by absolute force. This is "God organizing in

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1. Bushnell, "Life of the Lives," in Work and Play, p. 299.
2. Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 137.

the Church His Eternal Society." Man himself will remain incomplete until he is set in that society.[1]

The Strategy of the Past and the Strategy of the Future

Bushnell and Finney: a comparison of effectiveness. The social strategy of the Great Revivals which Finney shared and helped to articulate produced direct and dramatic results in American society, and produced them quickly. Not as much of Bushnell's social action was as visibly effective in its immediate impact as that of the revivalists. Beyond his own congregation such effects from his quarter were the result of wide publication of sermons dealing with political matters. For the most part, these were preached first to his own people, and thus were addressed to those in faith within the church.

Bushnell, saw the whole process of strategic action toward social transformation as centering in national politics. That was not true of the revivalists to the same degree, as important as politics was held to be by nearly all of them. Even in his central area of politics, however, Bushnell did not accomplish many of the basic changes which he called for. This was partly due to large elements of political naivete which intermingled with his considerable natural political talent and sagacity. All in all, Bushnell provides an illustration of Reinhold Niebuhr's thesis that the modern

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1. Bushnell, "God Organizing in the Church His Eternal Society," in Sermons on Living Subjects (New York, 1872), p. 287.

"children of light" often react to the moral cynicism of the "children of darkness" by being foolish as doves instead of wise as serpents.[1] His lack of greater immediate political impact was also due to his concentration on another, broader objective. Bushnell's main contribution to Christian social strategy lay not in the area of plans for taking immediate objectives but in the attempt to develop a whole new military science for the assault upon the citadel of evil. Society, through the church, is to progress by the incarnated Spirit of Christ to the very threshold of the Kingdom of God itself:

> If it should be imagined that these . . . pictures relate to the perfect state of the blessed hereafter, that may be true; but it will be true only as a glorious kind of city life in God has been first produced here, flowing into that by transition.[2]

The seeds of the new approach had long been germinating in the New England theological seed-bed, but Bushnell was still ahead of his time. Only in the next generation was this, his most significant contribution, to be appropriated and its tactical implications drawn out -- and even then it was not fully understood.

The strength and weakness of revivalism's strategy. Revivalism's whole social strategy was geared for immediate results. Its primary weapon was the revival itself. This was a highly effective weapon under the prevalent

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, (New York; Scribner's, 1944).

2. Bushnell, Building Eras, p. 31.

cultural and religious conditions. It obtained results in the reform drive as effectively as in converting men.

We have previously traced some of the most important reasons why the effectiveness of the revival movement and its particular strategy was bound to pass.[1] An excellent discussion of such reasons may be found in the conclusion of Cole's book.[2] We may well add that in at least one notable instance the very effectiveness of the strategy was against its continuance.

Its greatest crusade, the abolition of slavery, absorbed all the others in the end. It succeeded at the cost of a terrible civil conflict which left the nation exhausted and failed to settle some of the most basic problems presented by a long history of slavery as a social institution. Some of the blame for precipitating the War must be laid to more intemperate abolitionists than the revivalists themselves; but they must be charged with much of the credit for the combination of inflamed moral indignation with a rigid and denunciatory moralism.[3]

It must also be observed that these men exploited their religious and social resources for immediate results to a degree which resulted in depletion and generated

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1. Supra, pp. 64f., 86 f., 225 ff.
2. Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 223-228.
3. See Ibid., pp. 219 f.

reaction. They were highly dependent upon the active zeal of the layman, and upon a reservoir of wide respect for clerical leadership in society. To this they added little of enduring power in the long run. Their very theory of ministerial authority was unstable and overly dependent upon spontaneous recognition by the mass of Christians.[1] Yet if they lacked an adequate basis of authority, neither did they pay adequate attention to a careful process of developing broad concensus among the laity. Their intensive efforts to do so were too much confined to those disposed to agree with them. All of this reflects the weakness of their neglected idea of the church. Aside from the revival spirit itself, they had no way of conserving the koinonia into which the revival impact brought the christian believer, because their idea of the church never attained a consistent ecclesiological expression to guide the articulation of practical church-life and order. The revival excitement did not last. When the "burnt-over district" finally flamed out for good there was no real church to carry on, but only an organized shell. The continuity of the sanctified life which once had filled it had been taken largely for granted. In ~~any~~ part a protest against a decadent and static institutionalism, it failed to institutionalize its own new spirit enough to preserve it --

1. Supra, pp. 199-204.

despite all of the passion it had for organization. The revivalists' organizing techniques were all culturally rather than theologically based, and their inflexibility kept them from coming to terms with a new cultural context.[1]

Bushnell's transformation of the strategy of the Great Revivals. Bushnell's strategy was not designed to supplant that of revivalism immediately but to supplement, conserve and transform it by revolutionizing its basic social and theological premises. In doing so, however, he was actually persuing a different, farther-reaching social strategy. Its principle social weapon was internal subversion rather than frontal assault. The crucial change to be accomplished was the changing of social and religious presuppositions toward an organic and Incarnation-centered view of nature, man, history, society and the church. If this could be done, Bushnell felt, the task of healing the sickness of society would no longer be insurmountable.

Once that view had come to prevail, the powerful weapon of Christian nurture would be free to do its work -- and would conserve its effects in the very act of accomplishing them. All it needed was a church in which

1. Ibid.

the organic unity of believer with believer and of church with society was recognized. The transforming power which makes that unity an effective vehicle of salvation was abundantly present in the church already, creating the unity which it needed to extend its redemptive work.

It will not be quick work, but a process whose length severely taxed even the vivid imaginations possessed by Bushnell's millenarian contemporaries because it contradicted a very basic assumption of that kind of expectation of the Kingdom of God:

> Without knowing it, we tacitly assume that nothing is to appear beyond our scale, that our machine is to run but a short time longer, finishing off at last in the ordinary! On the contrary, just everything indicates, it seems to me, that these present times are God's beginnings, and we almost see with our eyes that the world is but an egg unhatched as yet; preparation, possibility, nothing more. It will take a long time yet to finish the plan, -- ages upon ages, "world without end," as the doxology sings, -- for it is not going to be a losing plan, as it would be if it were to be ended now. It will go on, we may believe, propagating salvation, character, saintship, brotherhood, intelligence, and glory, not for some hundreds, but more for some hundred thousands of years, till the populations of the redeemed souls preponderate so vastly as to throw all computations of loss out of mind. Great things in this view are yet to be done here, and we must not too soon conclude that nothing is to appear, transcending what is or has been.[1]

The millenial forms of the expectation of the Kingdom can not sustain the long process of forming and reforming necessary to prepare for the Kingdom's coming, Bushnell

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1. Bushnell, Building Eras, pp. 17 ff.

felt. Despite their apocalyptic literalism, they actually spiritualized the Kingdom's nature too completely. They take literally every word of symbolism and allegory contained in visions like those of "The New Jerusalem" and the city called "The Lord is There" in Revelation and Ezekiel, and allegorize every word implying form and concretion:

> But these definite measures, and all the twelves of the foundations and the gates, representing the twelve apostles of the Lamb, show at least that a very exactly finished, cubically squared society is understood, which exactness will somehow be represented in the definitely composed forms of their constructions. How too could it happen, if these prophecies are to be sublimated into merely moral significances, that one of them even thinks out a scheme of ornamentation perfectly original, hitherto scarcely used at all, yet having scope enough to create a new order of architecture.. .?[1]

The millenarian coming Kingdom thus can give no help to protracted social effort other than an inconsistent belief in progress without changes in the structures and forms of this world:

> A great many people, a whole major class indeed of the world, are ready always to judge that nothing can ever be, which is not. . . . Sometimes they are greatly delighted by the confidence of progress and of some great day to come, but that progress can do anything more than to just continue and extend the present is quite incredible; . . . They are going to convert the world, and liberate the world, and completely redintegrate society, but how can they imagine that greater men are to be seen, and more of them, and greater assemblies gathered, and new modes of worship and fellowship generated, such as will demand structures of another type and vaster dimensions . . . . Had these people of progress without expectation lived in the days when the Coliseum was founded, they would have laughed at the idea . . . . And yet now, here it is, just because an emperor has risen barbarous enough in his taste and surrounded by a people barbarous enough in their servility, to delight in the scenes which this hell of inhumanity is to exhibit! Why then should it be thought impossible that the regenerative, out-spreading, all-transforming power of our gospel, should sometime be able, in the glorious instinct of its fellowship, to do as great a thing also as it may want, whenever it is wanted?[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 32.
2. Ibid., pp. 17 f.

The idea of the immanent Kingdom of God growing in the physical forms of nature came forth from Bushnell's idea of the nation-church with little distance to travel toward its social Gospel form.

The transformation of the church-state into the immanent Kingdom of God. This was the legacy which Bushnell left to the Social Gospel's strategy for social transformation. The ecclesiological formulation which he gave to his idea of the church was a part of the gift, but it was not understood by his heirs. It seems doubtful that it was ever even read by his most direct disciple in the Social Gospel movement, Washington Gladden. Gladden's own ecclesiological efforts, such as they were, came largely after the apex of his leadership was past. Many influences beside Bushnell's had been added to his thought by that time. Still, if he had known of Bushnell's concept of the church it would be strange that he did not refer to it, even to reject it, at the crucial point of his discussion of the relation of the church to the Kingdom of God in The Christian Pastor and the Working Church.

We must conclude that in Gladden's understanding the great impact of Bushnell's idea of the church had been entirely transferred to the dominating theme of the presence and growth of the Kingdom in society. It is not

at all strange that Gladden completely missed recognizing Bushnell's ecclesiology for what it was. Gladden was too preoccupied with the new idea of the Kingdom to take the trouble to hunt out ecclesiological discussions which were not in plain sight.

Bushnell himself had little enough direct ecclesiological interest that he inadvertantly hid the fragments of his own ecclesiological thought in odd corners throughout his extensive writings. No one could find Bushnell's ecclesiology without taking pains much like those of the archaeologist delving in the strata of a ruin to construct a picture of the life and thought which has left its impress there. It is no wonder that the impression prevails that Bushnell did not have any ecclesiology at all. The blame for any such misconception must be borne by Bushnell himself.

It is thus a curious fact -- and in some respects a tragic one -- that Bushnell's great work of conceiving an idea of the church had little, if any, direct effect upon the nineteenth century trend toward ignoring the church. The blame for this must largely fall upon his own shoulders. His central concern in his soteriology was to replace revivalism's religious individualism with a return to reliance upon the church and upon the "fund of increase" intrinsic to its organic bosom in which Christ is incarnated.

The basic proposal forwarded by his social strategy was part and parcel of his church-related soteriology. The hope of social transformation rests upon the church's self-transformation. Such self-healing is only effectively empowered by the Spirit of Christ and only in the context of the organic church. Society's healing depends upon the penetration of every organic unit by such an organic church. In bringing this about, success depends entirely upon achieving a wide-spread understanding of the nature of the church throughout American Christianity. Yet Bushnell, reacting against past preoccupation with doctrines and disputes about form, could not bring himself to consider it important to set forth a clear doctrine of the church as a prominent part of his own polemic.

He assumed too easily that ideas arise out of experience, and that the right Christian experience must therefore produce ideas which are adequate to account for it. In this he was quite wrong. As the wide and pervasive influence of his idea of the church spread the idea itself underwent further transformation into the immanent Kingdom of God. Its new form came out nearly as dissociated from the church as had been the old salvation by revival of the solitary individual. What remained was the wedding of salvation to the process of social transformation through social solidarity, and some vestige of Bushnell's supernaturalism.

Synthesis and transformation. The pattern of Bushnell's social ideas and action falls very much under the kind of social strategy which seeks a concordat of church and state in which the state takes the action under the moral and spiritual guidance of the church. Since the state at present has fallen out of the church's counsel, his concern is to restore the relationship. The formality of legal establishment does not concern him. The only establishment that matters is establishment of the law of God as the law of both the church and the state. So far as establishing anything human is concerned, it is not the church which needs establishment in the eyes of the state but vice versa. That will be "God's Way of Establishing the Nation" which has never yet managed to establish itself as a unity in the minds of its citizens.[1]

Bushnell's idea of the church brings in the natural law and the organismic thought of our second church-motif. His social strategy aims at a great synthesis of Christ and culture which is so often characteristic of the church traditions centering in our second church-type. When we examine the synthesis, however, we find that it is really a transformation instead.

This happens through the same process by which we found the essence of the church finally centering in

1. Horace Bushnell, "God's Way of Establishing the Nation," MS sermon, cited in Henderlite, "Bushnell", pp. 243, 247.

faith rather than in the institutionalization of grace in the sacraments. The natural partner in the synthesis changes radically through the partnership. Instead of naturalizing the spirit, Bushnell's synthesis of nature and supernature spiritualizes nature. If this does not really happen, or if the extent of its accomplishment is seriously overestimated, the result is a "culture-Protestantism" which blesses nature and the status quo in the name of the Incarnation. So it was with the natural organic basis of the church. So it was also with the natural progress of society. When Bushnell saw the church as ultimately becoming identical with society what he saw in the union was all church, according to what he understood to constitute the essence of the church.

CHAPTER XI

GLADDEN: BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD BY THE POWER OF LOVE WITH THE AID OF THE WORKING CHURCH

The Issues and the Answers According to the Social Gospel

A New Age and a New Set of Issues

Finney and Bushnell, living and working during the same period, confronted the same basic problems in American society. Bushnell's theological ideas and work belong basically to a slightly later generation than that of his chronological contemporary. Yet their sharing of the same period of American history makes it possible to compare Bushnell's social thought with Finney's in a much more direct way than either of their ideas of social strategy may be compared with Gladden's. The Civil War is a great dividing line in the century on both social and theological questions.[1] It was Bushnell's anticipation of these far-reaching changes which made him a transitional figure with one foot on each side of the line. His leaning was toward the future rather than the past. While the social facts and problems which occupied Bushnell's attention were the same ones which Finney faced, the broad trends of social thought and the basic issues which concerned Bushnell were very much those which still occupied Gladden.

Those issues and movements had new forms in Gladden's

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1. See Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 3, 221.

mind, however. They no longer took the guise of a social trend toward Romanism, Infidelity and Slavery. In those former issues, the religious value of democracy and the task of making it work in service to divine righteousness and loving human justice had been the basic problem for Bushnell. It was still the basic one for Gladden despite the change in the form of the problem. For Gladden, however, not only were there new issues in which the basic problem of Christianity and democracy focused, but--strangely enough--they were no longer political in form for the most part.

The new set of issues revolved about a new set of social problems brought by the coming of the full-fledged industrial revolution. The Civil War had disposed of the slavery problem--or so it seemed. It was little recognized how incompletely it had solved the deep problems which had been created by the institution.[1] At the same time the economic demands of the war effort had given the final impetus to the boom of industrialization. Charles H. Hopkins specifies "four types of problems" which were seen clearly by the pioneers of the social gospel:

> They questioned the prevalent rationalization of unrestricted competition by classical economics; they regarded the conflict between labor and capital as the crux of the maladjustments attendant upon the industrial revolution; they condemned the business ethics of the "Great Barbecue"; and they

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1. See Gladden, Working People, p. 3.

> began an attack upon the problems of urban life, notably the relation of the church to the masses.[1]

We shall follow this list in examining Gladden's view of the nature and solution of these problems, with one alteration: While there is some justification for distinguishing the first item from the third, it will be adequate to our purposes to combine them.

Urban Life

Prophets in the wilderness. It is remarkable how well the early prophets of the Social Gospel understood the problems brought by the rapid growth of large cities in a newly industrial society without having available or (in most cases) realizing the need for refined tools of sociological observation and analysis. The problems seemed plain enough to the intuition of the sensitive Christain mind. As Hopkins tells us,

> . . . clergymen of the gilded age were theologically rather than sociologically minded. Children of their age and unaware of the titanic forces that were rapidly remodeling the structure of society, these pioneers must be regarded as religious men weighing social standards in the scales of Christian ethics. Their findings do not compare with the documented reports of social conditions that the development of sociology was later to make possible. Nevertheless many of them bravely challenged the current ideology. These early years were "a time of lonesomeness," the first prophets were few, and as Walter Rauschenbush said later of the period before 1900, they "shouted in the wilderness." But that is the lot--and the joy--of prophets.[2]

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 24.

2. Ibid., pp. 24 f.

A few qualifications need to be added to this observation if it is to be applied to Gladden for the entire period up to 1900. Gladden, and also many of the others, very soon became aware of the titanic forces at work, and saw their relationship to the industrial revolution. They could not know everything that these forces involved. That would require far more refined tools of social analysis than the emergent social science of the day could provide, and years of time to pursue investigation with the use of those tools.

The pioneers of the social gospel--especially Gladden --did see the same forces which we see to have been at work, however; and they identified them quite accurately on the whole. We must also note that Gladden himself was outstanding in his discernment of the need for disciplined sociological study. He began to say so at least as early as 1876, and so did Richard Heber Newton by the same date. Hopkins acknowledges this fact at a later point in his book.[1] Nevertheless it is true that their analysis suffered from the immaturity of the science of sociology as well as from their tendency to confuse the gospel with an optimistic and naturalistic world-view.

Slums. Gladden's social views are much better known today than are those of Bushnell and Finney. This is partly

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1. Ibid., pp. 107 f.

due, no doubt, to the continued presence of the problems of city life which he discerned with us today as familiar facts, although perhaps curtailed in viciousness to some extent. Gladden noted gravely the social effect of the slums. These had been created by the influx of large numbers of unskilled laborers and their families into industrial cities and by the deterioration of housing in the old residential areas of the city as business districts grew and old inhabitants of higher income level moved away from the center of the city. Many of the new industrial laborers who filled these vacancies were from immigrant or native rural populations. The educational level as well as the level of urban and industrial skills was generally low among these folk.

Economic injustice in the slums. Even after he gained greater sympathy toward the claims of the laboring class than he felt at first, Gladden maintained that a certain amount of economic inequality was inevitable and right. God had reasons for creating or permitting such variations in human condition in His divine economy. Each class has certain distinctive virtues which should be shared with the other classes in society. These need to be concentrated and specialized in a group of people in order that their fruits may better be disseminated to the social whole. Even in the close koinonia of the working church these class distinctions are not to be eliminated, but rather transcended by the bond of Christian fellowship so that

intellectual and moral cross-fertilization takes place across class lines.[1]

The inequities pointedly demonstrated by slum conditions far exceed the permissible limits of economic justice, however. The human suffering and temptation to corruption found there are unconscionable to the Christian. He must realize his responsibility for the existence of such conditions and his duty to do something to eliminate them.

Deterioration of the family. The family did not play quite such a constitutive role in the nature of the church in Gladden's idea as it had in Bushnell's. Yet it was still extremely important to him. The reason is that Bushnell's idea of the church had become Gladden's idea of the Kingdom of God in society. The "fundamental physical and moral importance of the family" had simply been focused in society rather than in both society and the church. Slums, Gladden stated, were an important part of the whole industrial-social problem which was causing the serious deterioration of the family.[2] Social deterioration, of course, affects the church seriously as well.

The solution to the slum problem. The solution of the problem in Gladden's mind seems to rest primarily upon the

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1. See Gladden, Christian Pastor, pp. 272-278. See also pp. 35-38.

2. Gladden, Applied Christianity (Boston and New York, 1886), pp. 194-197.

individual efforts of men who have some special resource to contribute, whether of wealth and power or of communicative skill and prophetic concern for justice and love. The church must emphasize "the duty of Christian charity" toward the less fortunate in society. This is a task of education which the minister himself must set in motion since he is the leader of the co-operative ministry of clergy and laity in the working church.

The wealthy should be encouraged to invest their money in model tenements to eliminate the slums.[1] The church is not a levelling commune, but its fellowship and constituting love concern more than a mere spiritual sharing. The ideal is for men to "share together the good which the divine bounty distributes to all."[2] Social stability requires the fundamental assumption that "it is every man's business to give as much as he can, prudently and safely, and with due regard to his own integrity, to all with whom he deals." He should not go so far as to impoverish himself and thus forfeit his power to give in the future.[3]

Once the conscience and good will of a few wealthy and influential Christians in the community can be aroused, the

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 104.
2. Gladden, quoted ibid., p. 89.
3. Gladden, Recollections, pp. 238 f.

slum will be gone for ever. It will be no more than a problem of physical and social engineering for which resources are not at all lacking. "Gladden believed the abolition of the slum to be as feasible and imperative as the drainage of a swamp."[1]

The isolation of the individual. A second major problem of urban conditions was one which Gladden saw as a particularly direct contradiction to the essence of Christianity and of the church. Individuals and small groups of people are increasingly isolated from one another.

This is especially the fault of the class-cleavage. It keeps the servant class from any real human contact with the master class even when the servant lives in the same house or neighborhood with the master. Employer and employee may confront one another but seldom truly meet on the job in the factories and shops. Urban isolation is also the product of the high degree of transiency in many neighborhoods filled with boarding houses or hotels. This poses a special problem for the churches of such an area.

The solution in the working church. In the solution of this problem the fellowship of the church itself must play the primary role--although if it fails, the Kingdom will see

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 158.

to it that this problem, like all others, is dealt with. The great institutional churches of the period provide one good answer, with their bowling alleys, pool parlors, classes for teaching needed skills and imparting knowledge, social service groups and a host of other activities:

> The social influence of churches of this nature can scarcely be computed. More than any other agency at work in the community they tend to break down the barriers which keep social classes apart, and to cultivate that goodwill which is the only adequate social bond.[1]

The primary trouble with the institutional church is its size. That immensity may be necessary in some particular neighborhoods in order to accomodate their masses of population and to support such a host of adjunctive institutions. Gladden felt that on the whole the smaller size which he recommended for the working church would provide a closer fellowship and thus go farther toward providing a permanent solution to the problem.[2]

Political corruption. The final problem which we may note as associated with the conditions of urban life is corrupt politics. Gladden had little understanding of the rootage of the political machine in the social needs of low income and immigrant groups in the big Eastern cities. He was

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1. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. 414.
2. Ibid., pp. 25 f.

totally unaware of the fact that machines such as the Tweed group actually did serve those needs to some extent through the much-maligned system of political patronage, when no other social avenue was available to these people.

We have noted Gladden's attack upon Tweed during his early days as an editor on the New York Independent.[1] His criticism was based on the simple fact that the activities of groups such as the Tweed Ring amounted to robbery of the public coffers. This was especially despicable in Gladden's estimation because those public funds should have been used for public charity to lighten the load of the poor.

The solution. His political solution rested upon the naive assumption that promoting public indignation among the intelligent people in society would suffice to turn the rascals out and forthwith to exhibit them behind bars as a living example that political crime does not pay.[2] That would solve that problem. He clearly regards it as the church's business, since it is a moral matter. He does not say what, if anything, the church as such should do. He does not call for specific attacks from the pulpit such as Charles Parkhurst undertook against the administration of Tammany Hall in New York from the pastorate of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in

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1. Supra, pp. 167 f.
2. Ibid.

1892.[1] Gladden himself undertook to effect a reform in Columbus, Ohio, by serving on the City Council, but without much effect it would seem.

Labor and Capital

The successor to the all-important slavery issue. The new industrial conditions and their creation of two antagonistic and uncommunicating classes seemed to Gladden the truly central problem of his own time and of the years to come:

> Now that slavery is out of the way, the questions that concern our free laborers are coming forward; and no intelligent man needs to be admonished of their urgency. They are not only questions of economy, they are in a large sense moral questions; nay, they touch the very marrow of that religion of good-will of which Christ was the founder. It is plain that the pulpit must have something to say about them.[2]

In his estimate of the basic importance of this problem to all of the rest of the social problems of the industrial age he was essentially correct.

We have just described the moral and religious difficulties which Gladden saw as rooted in the class division of society. This division is both a principal cause and a principal result of the tension in the relations of labor and capital in the industrial order. We have also seen how

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1. See Charles H. Parkhurst, My Forty Years in New York (New York, 1923), pp. 109-116, and Our Fight With Tammany (New York, 1895).

2. Gladden, Working People, p. 8, cited in Hopkins Social Gospel, p. 24.

Gladden expected the class tension to be overcome and the importance of the church's role in that outcome. We may here carry that description into the area of industrial democracy and economics.

The unionization of labor. The struggle to organize labor unions was in its infancy, but the labor union was already emerging as a force to be reckoned with. The Homestead Strike of 1877 with its bloodshed shocked the public into a rude awakening to that fact, and to the magnitude of the industrial tension behind the rise of the labor movement. Even Gladden was at that time unaware of the vast dimensions of the matter. Unlike most churchmen, however, he had become aware of the problem before that time, and knew that it was a very serious one.

During the previous year he had inaugurated a series of Sunday-evening lectures for members of his congregation, in which he dealt with the problems of the laborer. It is significant that he did not rely upon the pulpit alone for such education, but used a church meeting in which the atmosphere of a more informal fellowship could prevail and in which questions could be asked. These lectures were published the same year under the title Working People and Their Employers. The book was not sympathetic enough toward the laborer and the union movement to his taste thirty years later, but the main principles which he propounded as the basis of a solution

remained characteristic of his views.[1]

His holding of views so advanced for the time was helped along by the fact that his own church contained laboring men. He was thereby in the middle of the labor problem, where other ministers had little contact with it.[2] We shall not attempt to trace the evolution of his labor ideas nor to distinguish his early ideas from the later ones, so we shall not include those which he discarded as his viewpoint matured on the question.

He found no valid moral or religious reason against the right of labor to organize and to strike when necessary, although the latter tactic should be used with restraint.[3] He did not belive violence during a strike to be commensurate with Christian ethical standards, and argued that it will not be an effective measure.[4] Non-violent pressures are permissible to the Christian, however. The laborer has a right to a fair share of the product to which his labor contributes--although Gladden considered the labor-theory of economic value which seemed the basis of socialism to be an inadequate account of the matter.[5] The laborer is not getting his

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1. Hopkins, ibid., p. 30.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
3. Gladden, Working People, pp. 137 f.
4. Ibid.
5. Gladden, Applied Christianity, p. 92.

fair share, and he has a right to organize in order to demand economic justice. "The law gives to capital an immense advantage in permitting its consolidation in great centralized corporations," he declared, "and neither law nor justice can forbid laborers to combine, in order to protect themselves against the encroachments of capital, so long as they abstain from the use of violence, and rely upon reason and moral influence."[1]

The solution of the problem of labor and capital. The simple recognition of this right would lead to the solution of the problem, Gladden felt. The strike would then become an unnecessary weapon. That would be a fortunate thing, because the strike usually results "in more loss than gain to the laboring classes," except in obtaining moral justice.[2] Recognition of the issue of economic justice involved in the whole labor problem would open the way to a change in the basic understanding of the relation of labor and capital. This recognition would clear up the real root of the trouble.

As did later preachers of the Social Gospel, Gladden believed that the whole idea of basing the economic system upon competition was wrong on moral and economic grounds. In the production of goods in industry, just as in the production of love in the working church, co-operation is the

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1. Gladden, Working People, p. 138.
2. Ibid., p. 40.

key principle.[1] The principle of co-operation should be substituted for the profit motive as the driving power of economic activity and the ordering principle of economic structure. Profit will still be made, but industrial and social peace will reign when the golden rule is applied to both profits and wages by the two industrial partners.[2]

A panacea. Jesus' law of life was Gladden's panacea for all of the ills of society and of the church. "The power of Christian love" will suffice to "smoothe and sweeten all the relations of capitalists and labor," Gladden exulted.[3] Obstacles to this law as a principle of industrial organization are presently posed by "the mental and moral qualities of working-people," but those will disappear through education.[4] In the church, the power of love will accomplish the needed work of social reconciliation. It will bring workers and employers into a koinonial fellowship of personal friendship and dedicated co-operative labor designed to bring in the Kingdom in the whole of society. In this, the primary task is that of teaching. Church-members must learn that the principle of love and co-operation is both the substance of

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1. Ibid., p. 50.
2. Ibid., pp. 50, 43.
3. Ibid., p. 43.
4. Ibid., p. 50.

the supernatural and saving revelation stemming from Jesus Christ, and also the basic power which drives and unites nature and society--and that its superior effectiveness to any other as a social and economic force is demonstrated by sociology and economics.

Gladden's panacea of love and co-operation was, of course, a utopian dream. It had much the same quality shown by his major pioneering contribution to Social Gospel fiction, The Christian League of Connecticut.[1] Gladden described this as a "prophetic dream-story." He related how a fictional interdenominational league turned a factory town into a minor paradise through "the Christianizing of our churches." It is said by Hopkins to have "exerted considerable influence toward church co-operation and consolidation."[2] It and the rest of Gladden's work have no doubt had real influence upon the solution of the labor problem in society, too. Yet neither that nor anything else has solved the problem to anything like the extent forecast confidently in Gladden's dreams.

The unrecognized dangers of co-operation. We can see a great deal of value in the work of men like Gladden in the Social Gospel stream, despite their utopianism. We need not

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1. This was first written for the Century Magazine, and then published as a book under the title given, in 1883.

2. Hopkins, Social Gospel, pp. 140 f.

question that they made more than a sentimental contribution to social strategy and action in their time. We still need to learn from them today. Their oversights should be as instructive to us as their correct insights, however.

The element of sentimental optimism--shown in even such a realist as Gladden was relative to most of the rest in the movement--caused it to underestimate the destructive possibilities of human co-operation itself. Social analysts today are beginning to realize that a tacit coalition of unionized labor with the price-leaders of the nation's principal industries can together ride out the inflations and recessions of national economic cycles with little discomfort, while consumers whose income derives outside those two groups suffer severely. There is reason to suspect that this fact has not eluded the two groups which benefit by it.

A second problem of co-operation between labor and capital--or usually today between labor and management--is the possibility of its taking the form of paternalism. To that problem the labor movement soon became sensitive. The Social Gospel had to counter such a perversion of its co-operative principle by intensifying its stress upon the fact that there can be no true love without fundamental justice. Paternalism in various forms is still with us today, although most of its forms are subtler than in a former era. Where it is to the worker's actual economic benefit, it can still be

irresponsible toward the rest of society in the way first mentioned.

Sin and social optimism. We must credit these realizations to the somewhat more developed social sciences of today, to an appreciable extent. Yet the awakening of social scientists themselves to political and social realism owes a distinct debt in many cases to theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr, and thus to the rediscovery of the problem of sin which had slipped from the consciousness and the presuppositions of Gladden and the men who followed him.

Gladden no longer shared Bushnell's realization that men generally have no conscience when they are acting as public bodies. Bushnell could be a sublime ultimate optimist because he saw the gospel in the church overcoming sin and the social body becoming the corpus Christianum of the church. Gladden could be a sublime utopian because he saw the social body as already consolidated with the growing Kingdom of God on earth. The former must be credited with setting the fast pace which the latter surpassed.

Individualism, Evolution and Classical Economics

The basic problem of the labor and capital bifurcation in society had its ideological side as well as posing concrete evils. To Gladden the solution of the concrete problem required the rallying of the natural human sentiments of kind-

liness and fairness to the point of active love. In this task, the winning of the ideological battle was the crucial first step, and the champion of this battle should be the minister as teacher and prophet.[1]

Aggressive individualism. Revivalism had greatly heightened the individualism of American religion and culture. With the decline of the revivalists and their influence over the prosperous merchant class, it became progressively a less benevolent individualism in those circles. The conquest of a new industrial empire and the rapid exploitation of America's abundant natural resources in the "Great Barbecue" whetted the appetites of the new capitalists for greater ventures.

Acquisitiveness cloaked itself in a host of natural and supernatural sanctions. Privilege was often justified as the reward of virtue, as the result of divine predestination, and as the sovereign right of the self-made individual--often enough all at the same time, without regard for philosophical or theological consistency. In the mean time, the death of socially-concerned revivalism as a widespread influence had been accompanied by the settling of most of the American churches into an other-worldly pietism. Many Christians felt no religious concern over the problems of society other than the obligation to dispense nominal charities to the poor on

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1. See Gladden, Christian Pastor, pp. 83-89.

occasion. Christianity was by and large comfortably acclimated to the "gilded age."

Rejection of religious and economic determinism. Against this condition Gladden and others rose to the challenge. The exaggerated individualism of the times, represented in the voices of aggressive capitalism, was subjected to a constant running attack throughout Gladden's preaching and writing. This individualism is threatening the social foundations by weakening the family, as well as rationalizing greed and injustice.[1]

Gladden attacked the doctrine of "laissez-faire" and the exploitation of the notion that the "invisible hand" of economic law automatically converts individual self-interest into public welfare. These theories of classical economics, with their treatment of labor as a commodity to be regulated by supply and demand beyond the power of employer or worker to control, he placed in the same class with the deterministic doctrines of high Calvinism and rejected as flatly. Men are free to act in moral matters, and these are moral issues.[2]

Evolution as a sanction for privilege. It is illuminating to note that the new theories of biological and social evolution were also appropriated as a bulwark for the capitalist's economic privilege. Huxley emphasized the grim implica-

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1. Gladden, Applied Christianity, pp. 194-197.
2. Gladden, Working People, pp. 36 f.

tions of the struggle for survival of the fittest when applied to human cultural and moral attainments. Human progress must be maintained by a struggle against the natural forces of evolution itself warned Huxley. In the economic area, however, some of the fittest found the implications of Huxley's natural struggle for survival to present a personal prospect which was far from grim. They hurried to justify their own practices as the way of nature which it is not for man to oppose or blame.

The counter-attack. We may reasonably suppose that such uses of Huxley's variety of Darwinism was a factor disposing Gladden toward the benign evolution of Spencer's social Darwinism instead. He had theological reasons as well, of course, for favoring the Spencerian form of evolution. The whole current of the New Theology was deeply attached to the notion of God's immanence in nature through the Incarnation of Christ's love into it. That Bushnell's doctrine of the Incarnation had contributed substantially to this feature of the theology is plain. Bushnell's own specific theory of evolution--half-formed though it was--may well have been as direct a contribution to Gladden's social Darwinism as was Spencer's similar theory.

At any rate, Gladden did not miss the opportunity to challenge the basing of an ideology of unrestricted competition upon evolution. Natural evolution gives rise to increasing

co-operation and harmony rather than the sacrifice of the weak for the benefit of the strong. Evolution itself is really nothing less than the ever-growing Kingdom of God![1]

Concentration of fire upon the capitalist. The ideological war was one to be waged mostly against the capitalist class, for it is the capitalist who needs the most persuasion if a fellowship is to be formed in the working church which will include the laboring class. The laborer will come in readily enough if he is shown that he will be welcomed and accepted. Furthermore, it is the capitalist who must first be persuaded to substitute the Christian law of the Golden Rule for the profit motive, if industrial relations are to be transformed and put on a basis of co-operation.

Gladden refused to take sides as between the two classes.[2] His leanings were clear enough to anyone who looked, however. He pointed to the traditional identification of the church's interests with the workers and the poor, and to Jesus' vocation as a carpenter.[3] The laborer is partially absolved because he naturally responds in kind when the capitalist guides his own industrial activity by the principle of selfish profit.

It is necessary to warn and guide the laboring class as

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1. Gladden, Ruling Ideas, pp. 255 f.

2. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 29.

3. Gladden, The Christian Pastor, p. 27; Gladden, Working People, p. 51.

well as the capitalists, however. They must consider what the economy can bear in making their demands, and exercise the spirit of love and sacrifice in the conduct of their wage negotiations.[1] The laboring class must also be given education and counsel in the ideological field, particularly on the matter of socialism. Gladden felt that structural revisions were necessary if industry is to be organized according to the principle of co-operation. He did not regard the basic formal structures of the economic system as in need of revolution, however.

Rejection of socialism. Socialism had some attractive points to him as an ideal, but he rejected it, as he also rejected Ruskin's benevolent feudalism which influenced his own thinking.[2] Gladden's critique of socialism as a utopian and impracticable theory illustrates the hard-headed social realism of which he was capable at his best.

The early years of the incipient Social Gospel shared a general public distrust of socialism, being suspicious of its irreligious basis on the Continent and of its foreign origins, and associating it with the German immigrant populace. Those who sympathized with the plight of the proletariat tended to regard socialism as a clever scheme of cynical

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 29.
2. Ibid., p. 31.

demagogues for exploiting the laboring classes.[1] The rejection of socialism by the later Social Gospel moved away from that atmosphere and was based primarily upon points of social and economic analysis, as in Gladden's mature views.

It was also based to some extent upon a general inclination toward amelioration rather than revolution in matters of social structure as opposed to social attitude--an inclination which has enjoyed a tradition in Christian ethics extending all the way back to the teachings of Jesus and of Paul about the state. There was, in addition, a general acceptance of the foundation stones of a capitalistic economy except in the matter of its motivation, and little realization of how essential the profit motive was to the whole system. Gladden felt the sacredness of the institution of private property to be a perfectly valid doctrine and its preservation to be a valuable stimulus to the worker's self-improvement.[2]

There was a certain realism in this on Gladden's part. He argued also that capital would disappear under socialism because this motive for its accumulation would have been removed without the substitution of any other more powerful.

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1. These points are well documented in James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York, 1936). Gladden at first shared much of this feeling: see Working People, pp. 138 ff.

2. Gladden, Working People, p. 206.

The utopianism of the whole idea is further shown by the impossibility of effecting the change to its system short of civil war.[1] It is significant that Gladden and Rauschenbush, the two figures of the Social Gospel's youth who most retained the evangelical note in their understanding of the gospel itself, were also among the least utopian and sentimental of its leaders.

The Church and Gladden's Strategy for Social Progress

A Strategy Centered in the Growing Kingdom of God

The growth of the Kingdom as the end and the means. Gladden's social strategy comes very near to describing itself without further comment once we have examined his idea of the church, his specific social analysis, and his recommendations for dealing with the problems which he discerned. For we find, on the whole, that the range of social problems with which he was concerned were highly complex in nature but his understanding of them and his approach to their solution was very far indeed from complexity.

Everything in Gladden's social thought and action converges neatly although not entirely consistently upon a few simple motifs: the problem of broken brotherhood; the need to restore the breach and embody the restored fellowship in a

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1. Hopkins, Social Gospel, p. 74.

tangible community; the power of sacrificial love to evoke the restorative impulses from good human nature; and the instrumentality of reason, experience and inspired sentiment, which demonstrate the practicality of love and goad the will into acting upon what the mind accepts. These themes are but repeated in endless variations. Indeed the matter is even simpler than that: the basic themes themselves are all summed up and contained in the one, dominating idea of the ever-growing, all-enfolding Kingdom of God on earth.

The church and the strategy of the Kingdom. The relation of the church to Gladden's social strategy is given in his conception of its relation to the Kingdom of God. The church is in the last analysis less than the indispensible brain of the Kingdom. What could a body do without a brain? The answer is obvious. Gladden does not want to give up the crucial importance of the church, for his criticism of its faults is that of one who is loyal to the old friend which he is reproving. Yet when love comes, old friends must part if the friendship stands in the way of the new love. It is to be hoped that the church will not stand in the way of the new idea of the Kingdom, but Gladden has already become more detached from his loyalty to the church than he realizes.

The Kingdom can grow and thrive and reach maturity without that which is supposed to be its brain, and it cannot wait long for the brain to catch up to the body's growth.

It can find a new and different brain to guide it readily enough.[1] Gladden's hopes and his strategy for realizing them are centered in the Kingdom, and incidentally in the church which may be made into the most useful instrument of the Kingdom if it will but prove to be pliable enough.

Is there a real strategy in Gladden's mind? Since the characteristics of the Kingdom are so pervaded by evolutionary optimism about the inevitability of social progress, the question arises whether Gladden actually has a social strategy at all. One might well suppose that his immense faith in the inevitability of the Kingdom would lead to contentment with the present rate and form of progress and eliminate the need to do anything more than rejoice in its coming and witness to its reality in the status quo. Some of the preachers of the New Theology, indeed, reacted in just that way to the fact of the Kingdom, as we have seen.[2]

It is not difficult to account for the fact that this was not Gladden's response. The phenomenon of a sublime trust in the inevitability of a desirable outcome of all things under the sovereignty of God becoming the spring of human action in the world (which may even border on fanaticism) is a familiar one in Calvinism and its descendents. For Gladden the sover-

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1. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. 32.

2. Supra, pp. 312 f.

eignty of God lay in the irresistable growth of the Kingdom. The powerful apprehension of a great good fills him with impatience for its consumation. The confidence that man has been made capable of accelerating it by virtue of his created nature and the divine gift of the power of love propels him to energetic action to that end.

The need for human action and the confidence of its effectiveness is not lacking in Gladden. It still remains true in a sense that he did not have a real social strategy. His response lacks the depth of thought and planning for social action which is to be found in Rauschenbush. Much of it was not so much a concerted social strategy as a spontaneous, prophetic response--a voice crying out in the wilderness against social forms of evil.[1] This was no doubt due in part to the loneliness of the vision. The company of co-workers for the Kingdom had not yet rallied around the cause in the early days, and the resources for carrying out a major strategy were not yet at hand except as a hope and a faith.

The immaturity of the Social Gospel's theology in Gladden's day. Yet with such a confidence in the cause, the planning of the great strategy and the mapping of the campaign would have been quite possible--and perhaps a most important contribution to the future under the circumstances.

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1. Supra, p. 467.

Gladden did so to some extent. That such a practical mind as his did not give more extensive thought to such a plan is perhaps most of all the result of his lack of a mature and consistent theology as a basis for such a comprehensive task.

The Social Gospel was not to acquire such a theological basis until Walter Rauschenbush put his mind to the task. Yet Gladden cannot be absolved on the grounds of its being too early for such a task during his own prime. He might well have found one nearly complete in F.D. Maurice or Horace Bushnell.

The fault is also that of Bushnell himself, however. The liberality which he scorned was introduced into the broad current of American theology largely through his own romanticism, where experience was the source of all the standards. The great standard of the historical Jesus and his teachings was needed by the generation which followed him in order to curb the tendencies of Bushnell's theology to conform to any social mold into which it might be poured.

An Individualistic Strategy for Achieving Structured Community

Strategic action begins with the individual. We may easily summarize the relatively simple strategy which Gladden did elaborate for advancing by man's efforts the Kingdom of God which is growing under God's power. The strategy always begins with the persuasion of the free mind and will of the individual. The Christian individual is then to proceed with

the effecting of changes in social structure.[1]

This is an indication of the fact that Gladden's social solidarism is not quite so thoroughgoing as we might at first suppose from his statements. It also reflects his idea of the church and the manner of the church's constitution by individual, voluntary decision. The solidarity of society, as that of the church, is not so much something to be recognized and employed as a means of grace in the first instance as it is something to be achieved and then used in that manner.

Strategic action begins at the local level. The object of the social strategy is to achieve human reconciliation and brotherhood. This must be achieved by stages, in an evolutionary process forwarded by a combination of divinely-given inspiration and human contrivance and effort. A localized fellowship must be achieved first, as the concentration of inspiration into a particular form from which it can contrive to spread itself more widely without losing its cohesion. "The inspiration is the essential thing. Life is diviner than form. Yet life is never formless."[2] The form taken by the gathering of the fellowship is not itself the cohesive bond of the koinonia once it is brought together. The inspiration provides that.

The key role of the local church. Here, of course, is

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1. See Brauer, Protestantism in America, pp, 290 f

2. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. 89.

the role of the church in the strategy. It is a role which might be done by some other institution in the community, but the church will be the most useful agency for this purpose if it will remain true to the love of its Master. "The church is on trial before this generation upon this very issue, whether there exists within it a genuine brotherhood by which the barriers of social caste can be broken down."[1] If it does not serve this function, it is worse than useless.[2] It does not have such a genuine brotherhood at the present, by and large, except in ideal.[3]

The attainment of brotherhood in any primary social group will bring the extention of brotherhood throughout society as a whole; and "Just as soon as men are ready to answer that question heartily, in the affirmative sense, our social problems will disappear as easily as the August sun absorbs the morning mist."[4] Some limited social legislation will be required as well, but this affirmation of the principle of brotherhood will largely suffice.

The achievement of koinonia by personal interaction. What is the specific course of action to be followed in effect-

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1. Ibid., p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Gladden, Applied Christianity, p. 157.
4. Gladden, quoted in Hudson, Great Tradition, p. 189.

ing this brotherhood in the church? It requires the enlistment of all the laity in the ministry of spreading fellowship inside and outside of the church.

> It is by this close relation of personal friendship, and by this alone, that the Christian church can be built up and the principles of the gospel made to prevail. The religion of Christ cannot be propagated in any other way. It is only by the contact of mind with mind, of heart with heart, of life with life, that its virtues and graces are reproduced and multiplied.[1]

Furthermore, methods and opportunities must be devised and made institutional "to 'make channels for the streams of love'".[2] In the working church, therefore, soap may not be a means of grace, but living rooms are: "The parlors of the church are an essential part of its outfit for Christian work, and the social meetings held in them, with which no religious exercises are connected, are to be reckoned as a means of grace."[3]

The extension of koinonia by mechanism. The work, even though sustained by a solid koinonia, is still effected primarily by the direct and conscious impact of individual upon individual in one-to-one conversation. This is also true of the minister's role, for the most part, upon which depends the

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1. Gladden, Christian Pastor, p. 276.
2. Ibid., p. 280.
3. Ibid., p. 284.

start of the whole process and its continued leadership and inspiration. "The minister ought to be one of the best known men in his neighborhood."[1] Preaching also requires that the congregation be brought in under the eye of the preacher in the seating arrangement of the "auditorium." He is also to use sociology in order to find methodological aids and techniques in developing this work and this fellowship.

One particular technique for beginning the "Christianization of the church" in a local parish is recommended by Gladden. It is suggested by Dean Gott in his book, The Parish Priest in Town. We will recall that valuable techniques may be appropriated from the hierarchical churches:

> This leader of Christian work counsels the pastor to begin by gathering unofficially about him a few kindred souls, to whom this work of the church will be, as it was to the Master, meat and drink. A few such can be found in every parish; . . . It is not for him to make the work seem light to those whom he calls about him. "The self sacrifice of this active Christianity is only an attraction, never a deterrent; you need not water it down. . . . The only helpers this will give you will be a limp and sorry crew, like Falstaff's recruits . . .'"[2]

Then how about a stiffening of the fiber of the army in the church by banishing the limp and sorry, as Finney was inclined to recommend? That is not right, because everyone has a right to become a worker for the Kingdom. Nor is it necessary,

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1. Ibid., p. 174.
2. Ibid., p. 218.

because Gladden's social gospel can make such folk useful, even if only in a small way:

> We are sometimes inclined to say that it would be better for all our churches if they could be sifted, as Gideon's army was sifted; if the faint-hearted and the ease-loving and the worldly-minded could all be sent to the rear, and only the brave and the faithful were left in the ranks. But this is the counsel of unwisdom. These timid and indifferent people are worth saving; and the only way to save them is to set them to work. Even if the service which they undertake is but slight, it will be good for them to feel that they are identified with the life of the church, and have a right to count themselves not merely as passengers but as helpers.[1]

The Christianizing of society by Christianizing the church. Since the church is to be used as the primary instrument for advancing the Kingdom-centered strategy, the Christianizing of the church to make it a serviceable instrument is the first phase of the strategy. "All this is of the rudiments, but there is reason to fear that it is not well understood. How long must we wait for the church to be Christianized?"[2] Well--at least long enough to give it a try. It will be a herculean task, "but the fact that a duty is difficult hardly excuses us from its performance. The more arduous the work the greater the reward for doing it."[3] Gladden would be horrified if he were told that sometimes he belongs in Rome

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1. Ibid., p. 418.
2. Ibid., p. 255.
3. Ibid., p. 278.

rather than in Geneva.

How far Gladden achieved the Christianizing of his own church in Columbus, Ohio, is difficult to say. If he did so it did not achieve the wonderful effects brought by the mythical Christian League of Connecticut to its town. A study of the definite action and accomplishments of Gladden's working church in Columbus shows disappointingly little of this sort--especially when Gladden considered the local church and the local community to be the place to start if a start is ever to be made. He did make some effort. He served for two years upon the city Council in an attempt to reform the city administration, for instance; but no great results were forthcoming. His primary social influence came through his widely-published writings, which he began while still at North Adams, Massachusetts.

Gladden was a great visionary and a great inspirer. Yet he insisted that love must be set to work in deeds rather than remaining a mere sentiment. His own greatest deed was in persuading others of this truth, and identifying things which needed doing. The accomplishments of his own social strategy fell miserably short of his great expectations, not because it accomplished nothing great but because he expected something far more difficult to achieve than he realized:

> But would not this make a complete overturning in all our social customs? Possibly: but may it not be that society needs a complete over-

> turning? The law of what is called society is, for the greater part, the law of self-pleasing. Not benevolence, but taste, is the arbiter of its affairs. The question is not in social circles and social assemblies, How can I do the most good--how can I confer the most happiness? but rather, How can I gratify my own tastes most thoroughly? As our civilization advances, this becomes more and more the principle on which society in some of its circles is organized. And this is not Christianity; it is heathenism; it is paganism; a refined and elegant variety, no doubt, but still paganism; and the religion of the meek and lowly Nazarene has no more powerful foe. Nothing needs Christianizing more than what is called, by a polite euphemism, Christian society. The thorough application of the Christian law to the social intercourse of neighbors, of members of the same church, would work a marvellous transformation.[1]

Gladden was up against a church whose condition made that a task too herculean for even the powers in which he placed his confidence to effect during his lifetime. It might have helped if his conception of those powers had retained something more of the full and authentic gospel than it did. His strategy might have been more realistic by virtue of a fuller recognition of the persistance of sin in the communities of the transformed, both within the church and within the Christianized elements of society. The church would rightly have remained the handmaid whose only justification is service to the Kingdom of God. But the church on earth might have been more integrally related to the presence of the Kingdom of God among men on earth, as the corruptible but indispensible locus of the Kingdom's coming.

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1. Ibid., pp. 278 f.

PART V

CHURCH AND WORLD

CHAPTER XII

THE PROCESS OF SALVATION AND THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CRITICISM

Toward A Relevant Critique

The Point of View

Description and evaluation. There can be no description of facts which is not at the same time an evaluation. The foregoing survey of nineteenth-century ideas of the church and Christian social strategies contains a thread of criticism which has been woven into the discussion. I have tried first to understand Finney, Bushnell and Gladden in their own context and with reference to their own vocational concerns. It is time now to bring together the principal criticisms which have been implicit as well as explicit in the description of those ideas.

The criticism has in a real sense grown out of the historical survey itself, which drives toward some distinct suggestions for contemporary ecclesiology and social ethics. Yet there is no such thing as a completely impartial and objective approach to such a survey as I have undertaken. It should be apparent upon inspection that there is a point of view which has been brought to the effort and which affects the description.

Objectivity and subjectivity. From the standpoint of objective description this operates as a bias. An ef-

fort has been made throughout the study to curb this bias and do justice to the realities in their own terms. Historical description must not become simply a matter of wish-fulfillment or self-expression. Yet the ideal of complete objectivity is a chimera. The belief that one has in fact attained a detached objectivity serves only to prevent awareness of the presuppositions which he actually employs and to prevent him from questioning their adequacy. The quest for total objectivity may thus result in a less responsible handling of the realities than would be possible if a frank recognition were made of the fact that one has a bias and an effort made to remain open to the insights afforded by interpretations offered from other points of view.

The point of view is not just a bias detracting from objectivity. It is, as Kierkegaard maintained, a subjectivity which opens an avenue to dimensions of human existence which cannot be penetrated by the objective stance.[1] Men are not mere objects, but knowing, deciding and acting subjects. We apprehend this human subjectivity only when we become aware of our own subjectivity and take this for our point of view as we attempt to know others.

The point of view in theology must include both objective and subjective approaches to knowledge within

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments (Princeton, N.J., 1936). Also, The Point of View, tr. by Walter Lowrie (London and New York, 1939).

a perspective framed by an ultimate faith. The object of faith is God. Yet the objective reality of God is known in an encounter in which the Christian finds himself to be both a knower and one who is known, an actor and a subject of God's action.

A Dialogue Between Critical and Constructive Analysis

The criticisms of Finney, Bushnell and Gladden which are brought to a focus below I have set within the framework of a constructive position on important issues of contemporary soteriology, ecclesiology and Christian social ethics. This position, as an outgrowth of the study itself, should be taken as a statement of conclusions reached on the basis of an examination of this stream of nineteenth-century thought and action. It should also be taken as a declaration of the bias which has been operative in the description, and as an invitation to criticism of the results of my study as I have set them forth. It is not offered as an answer to all of the problems which have been raised by this study. It is a confession of the faith on the basis of which I have sought to understand the issues, and which judges my own understanding as well as the understanding of the men whose ideas are being appreciated and criticized.

The major portion of this final Part is given

to this critical and constructive commentary, offering some suggestions for contemporary ecclesiology and social action on the basis of that evaluation. This is followed by a compact summary of the conclusions which are drawn in that portion of the chapter.

The Theological Context in the Nineteenth Century

In the introduction to this study I have argued for a contextual approach to the nature of the Christian ethic and to the problem of relating theories of action to the actual determination of a course of action.[1] To a fuller elaboration of this point in relation to the results of this study and to the contemporary scene I shall return later. Before proceeding with a constructive statement and a critique of the thought and action of Finney, Bushnell and Gladden from that perspective it will be well to anticipate two possible kinds of objection to such a procedure.

Religious Ideas and Their Cultural Context

It may be contended that these men were simply the product of environmental forces in their nineteenth-century American cultural context. On that assumption it would be claimed that it is irrelevant to criticize these men by the standards of a twentieth-century view-point in which a renewed interest in historic theological orthodoxy and in the church reflects cultural changes.

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1. Supra, p. 26.

Against the conception of religion as simply the ideological projection of socio-economic structures or of personal guilt-feelings, as in the views of Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, we may note the position taken by Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch.[1] Weber and Troeltsch assume that religious ideas have an autonomy as expressions of an independent religious life, and that they may act as causal factors in historical developments. Their work on the history of Christian social thought contributes to the verification of that contention.

Much the same thing has been accomplished by Richard Niebuhr in his examination of American Christianity's development, including the nineteenth-century movements of thought with which we are concerned.[2] He shares the median position of Weber and Troeltsch, as over against cultural or psychological determinism, on the one hand, and the conception of religious institutions as simply the ac-

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1. Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, tr. from 2nd German ed. by Marian Evans, (New York, 1875); Karl Marx, Capital, tr. by Eden and Cedar Paul (London, 1933); Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism, tr. by Katherine Jones, (London, 1939); Max Weber, "Social Psychology of the World Religions," in From Max Weber, pp. 269 f., also The Protestant Ethic (London, 1930), pp. 39 f.; Ernst Troeltsch, Social Teachings, II, 1002.

2. In The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York, 1929), Niebuhr traces the impact of cultural factors on this development. In The Kingdom of God in America, he then shows the need to refer to the operation of faith and theological concepts which have an independence of the culture in order to account for the presence of the creativity and the protest against social and economic structures which is found there. Cf. also his Meaning of Revelation (New York, 1941).

tualization of Geist, on the other hand.[1] The cultural relativity of religious institutions and ideas is not such as to deny ~~to them~~ a genuine autonomy and creative force to them nor to the religious faith and experience which they structure and express.[2] I shall have more to say later in support of this position, on the basis of the present study.

Even if this be admitted, however, it may be urged that the constructive position set forth below is irrelevant to the men studied and that criticism of them from that perspective unfairly holds them responsible for not choosing to follow theological directions which were actually not present as live options in nineteenth-century American Christianity. To indicate that this was not the case it will be well to mention a few of the alternatives to the direction taken by Finney, Bushnell and Gladden which were present as distinct new currents of thought and interest in America.

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1. The latter position is represented by Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago, 1944), in which culture and history are seen as the expression of religious experience of the Numinous, following Rudolph Otto's definition of religion. Another representative of this general position is Filmer S. C. Northrup. See his The Meeting of East and West (New York, 1946).

2. An excellent succinct review of these problems is presented in James M. Gustafson, "A Study in the Problem of Authority in Congregational Church-Order." (Unpublished paper mimeographed at Yale Divinity School).

Some Nineteenth-Century Alternatives

Their period saw a resurgence of interest in the church in many areas of Christendom. Among the new currents to the left and right in America several may be mentioned which reflected this interest in a return to confessional standards of doctrine and to an emphasis upon the church.

The "Burial Hill" Declaration. One such current within Congregationalism was expressed in 1865 by the "Burial Hill" Declaration. This was the first such platform subscribed to by a representative assembly since the Synod of 1648, at which was adopted the Cambridge Platform affirming the Westminster Confession and Catechism in all matters save those of polity, and the "Reforming Synod" of 1679-80, which added an affirmation of the doctrinal position of the Savoy Declaration. The Saybrook Synod's Platform in 1708, in Connecticut, which affirmed the Savoy Declaration as normative for faith, was construed by some counties as a basis for a presbyterial form of polity.

The "Burial Hill" Declaration of Faith, drafted by A. H. Quint, reaffirmed the doctrinal position taken in 1648 and 1680. It also recognized the ecumenical unity of the church and the sinfulness of division. It called for cooperation and fellowship with all Christians, and for the transformation of all of man's individual and social

relationships. The polity statement, formulated by Edwards Amasa Park of Andover, declared the independent government and the direct authority from Christ of the local church, and denied that the ministry has any official power of government in the church. Yet it condemned refusal by local churches to give account of their proceedings to neighboring churches when kindly ordered to do so.[1]

Princeton Presbyterianism. Meanwhile, in the Presbyterian Church, Charles Hodge at Princeton was vigorously defending the totality of the Westminister Confessions, and asserting the corporate unity of the church. He did, to be sure, take a somewhat Zwinglian position on the sacrament, stressing Calvin's Anti-Pelagianism as against his sacramental interest. Hodge referred to Calvin through the interpretation given by Turretin and Pictet, and his own theological system employed the Scottish Philosophy of Reid and Steward as received through the mediation of the Princeton tradition of John Witherspoon and Archibald Alexander.[2]

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1. Williston Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (New York, 1893), chap. xviii, pp. 553-570.

2. James H. Nichols, "Events and Trends -- Early Nineteenth Century" in They Seek a Country, ed. by G. J. Slosser, chap. xi, pp. 238-250. See also, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History, XXIV, No. 3 (September, 1955), pp. 11 ff. (Reprint.)

The Mercersburg Theology. During these same years, Hodge's position was opposed by the Mercersburg Theology of John W. Nevin (who once had shared the Princeton viewpoint) and of Philip Schaff. They affirmed a distinctive communication in the concrete mystical and glorified human body of Christ in the Lord's Supper, as opposed to communion only in his divine nature. They thus gave the sacrament an objective force rather than a mere power to quicken the appropriation of faith. Their system of theology as well as their ecclesiology centered about this understanding of the Mystical Presence rather than about Calvin's doctrine of predestination and the divine decrees. Nevin had moved from Presbyterianism and the Westminster Confessions to the simpler, less scholastic and more churchly Heidelberg Catechism and to the German Reformed Church. From a point of view not unaffected by Newman and the Oxford Movement he undertook a penetrating attack upon the Finney brand of revivalism at the time when it was spreading rapidly, and in this challenge the Mercersburg movement began.[1]

Lutheran Confessionalism. Charles Porterfield Krauth, another contemporary of these men, was at the same time leading American Lutherans in a return to the entirety

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1. J. H. Nichols, "Early Nineteenth Century," pp. 238-250.

of the Augsburg Confession and attempting to reverse the "rationalistic sectarianism" which he felt had invaded the views represented by Samuel S. Schmucker. An important aspect of his thought and scholarship was his discovery or rediscovery of the "Conservative Reformation." Krauth sought to preserve unity and fellowship with his opponents while maintaining an adherance to the body of doctrine contained in the Confession as binding in all matters of faith and church-order.[1]

Episcopalian High churchmanship. In the Episcopal Church, too, there was during this period a vigorous growth of concern for a return to more Catholic standards of doctrine as the basis of theology and church-order and to greater emphasis upon the importance of the church.[2]

1. Vergilius Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology (New York and London, 1927), pp. 312 ff., 340 f., 342 ff.

2. During this period a number of Congregationalists moved to the Episcopal Church, seeking a greater churchly emphasis and richer forms of worship without modifying their Congregational doctrinal position in any essential respects. Numerous remarks by Bushnell and Gladden testify to the fact that they were aware of this movement to Episcopalianism and were concerned to meet it with counter-argument and with some concessions to that which dissatisfied Congregationalists sought in the area of liturgy and of the parish system of church organization. See supra, chaps. vi, vii.

High churchmanship had been championed by Bishops Samuel Seabury and John Henry Hobart even before the Tractarian movement. Among the leaders of the movement later, in the nineteenth century, were the younger Seabury, the younger Hobart, Bishops George Washington Doane and William R. Whittingham. There was a simultaneous resurgence of vitality on the Evangelical side of Episcopalianism, represented by Bishop Alexander Viets Griswold before the Tracts, and later by Bishop C. McIlvane of Ohio. Although concerned to emphasize liturgical worship, the High Church movement in America was tempered somewhat by the Seabury tradition and its leaders were generally cautious about becoming extremely ritualistic. During this same period, William A. Muhlenberg, a convert from Lutheranism, was calling for greater liturgical freedom and a wider effort to meet the needs of the common people -- themes which were to rise to the fore later in the century.[1]

With this as background one can see that the constructive theological position set forth below is by no means one which differs radically from nineteenth-century positions which were well known to Finney, Bushnell and

1. George E. DeMille, The Catholic Movement in the American Episcopal Church (Philadelphia, 1941). Also, Vergilius Ferm, The American Church of the Protestant Heritage (New York, 1953), pp. 105-118.

Gladden and which it was perfectly possible for a nineteenth-century American Christian to hold. These were distinctly live possibilities for men coming out of the Congregational tradition. The aspect of my own position, as a Presbyterian, which most differs from Congregational tradition is that concerning polity. Yet the espousal of presbyterial forms of Congregational polity is witness to the fact that this contention is by no means irrelevant to the latter tradition. Presbyterian and Congregational theological presuppositions on polity had generally not differed radically until the nineteenth century when a great many men in both denominations altered or lost track of the greater part of their respective traditions. The New England heritage presents a continual dialogue with Presbyterianism on the question of polity.

With the foregoing matters in mind, we now turn to the case for and against the theological directions taken by Finney, Bushnell and Gladden in the light of some important present-day issues in ecclesiology and in the Christian ethics of social action. This critique will be given as a running commentary in which I set forth my own suggestions for the idea of the church and for an approach to social action.

I shall take up the issues in the same order followed by Parts II-IV of this dissertation. The nature of salvation and its process will be considered first. This

will then be carried into the discussion of the idea of the church. Finally, approaches to Christian social action will be discussed and set in relation to the issues discerned in the idea of the church and to the suggestions forwarded for a contemporary ecclesiology.

The Process of Salvation

There are three primary questions which must be answered by any full consideration of the nature of salvation in the Christian faith. The first is: From what does man need to be saved? Is there anything radically wrong with human life as we find it, and if so, what is the nature of the disease? The second question is: To what is man saved? What is the goal of the redemptive process -- what is the condition of redeemed human life? The third question which must be raised is: How is man saved? By what power does the process of salvation proceed?

The answers to these three questions are closely interrelated in any consistent soteriology. I shall not try to maintain a strict topical division among them here. The course of the nineteenth-century development with which I have been concerned in this study may be seen as a progressive loss of the sense of sin as constituting a radical problem to be overcome by the process of salvation. It may equally well be understood as a progressive scaling

down of the power which saves to the dimensions of natural human capacities. The glory of God is not maintained for long when there is little work to be done for which He must be given the credit.

Salvation Through Faith Overcomes Sin and Death

The loss of the perspective of Biblical faith. I have noted previously that the Reformation principle of the sole final authority of Scripture for faith and theology was highly emphasized by New England Puritanism, and that our three nineteenth-century men continued to acknowledge this principle at least formally.[1] Yet the overall direction of the development in which each played a significant part was one in which many of the distinctive Biblical presuppositions about the nature of man, sin and salvation progressively evaporated.

Finney emphasized God's just condemnation of the individual under the inheritance of original sin and the centrality of the atonement to salvation through the work of Christ. By the time he had finished denying that the individual suffers any disability whatsoever in appropriating the grace offered in the atonement, however, the problem of sin retained in his conception little of the seriousness which stands out in the Biblical attitude toward

1. Supra, chap. ii.

the problem. Gladden and his colleagues, standing at the end of this line of development, attributed their own conception of the essential goodness of human nature to the Bible itself. Bushnell's case is perhaps more difficult to assess. Among the three, he clearly had retained the strongest statements of the persistent power of sin over human life. Considering the extent of Bushnell's revolt against the standards of his tradition, that is surprising. We have seen that he was able to give some real content to this position, through his treatment of the disorder of the will.[1] His discernment of unconscious and involuntary levels of men's involvement with one another in both sin and redemption is a valuable insight, and one which is suggestive of Biblical presuppositions about the relationship of the individual to the community of faith or the people of God.

The thing which especially calls into question the normativeness of a Biblical viewpoint for Bushnell is his explicit statements about the status of Biblical thought for faith. The mere affirmation that the Biblical "spirit" is normative and does not change is dangerously vague as the sole means of preserving the centrality of Biblical authority, especially when it is contended that all thought-

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1. Supra, chap. iv.

forms must change in history in unspecified ways in order to express the same spirit. Bushnell actually treated the assumptions behind Biblical thought as normative, in so far as he apprehended them, far more than his explicit method acknowledged. Since he did not adequately account for their normativeness, his successors were free to drop these presuppositions to a larger extent than he did -- and they did so. Bushnell particularly invited this by treating the Biblical perspective as something which must be justified by marshalling arguments to demonstrate its reasonableness by the standard of man's common sense.

The increasing tendency of the men of this nineteenth-century theological stream to justify their doctrines by moral arguments or natural theology was a debilitating disease for faith itself. Poor theology is sometimes the product of inadequate thinking rather than an expression of unfaith, yet this particular development seems to reflect the latter factor. I do not pretend to judge the condition of the personal faith of these men at any given time. That is never possible, nor is it necessary. It is possible, however, to discern the presence of unfaith as one of the most important assumptions at work in the whole movement toward Pelagian moralism in this theological development. The progressive character of this trend, which was continued from the eighteenth-century development, suggests that the use of basic assumptions rooted in unfaith served to deepen the hold of distrust upon those who employed those assumptions.

The meaningfulness of the Biblical witness to faith. Implicit in what I have been saying here is the contention that any attempt to defend adherance to the point of view of the radical Biblical faith by argument appealing to some allegedly more certain principle constitutes an implicit denial of the perspective of faith, whether so intended or not. Since this point applies to all that I have to say in this chapter, I shall ask the reader's indulgence while I pursue this point before attempting to set forth my own views on the problem of sin and death as it relates to Biblical insights on the question.

I do not mean to suggest that rational argument has no place in theology nor that it accomplishes nothing. Such a contention would eliminate the theological effort altogether. I mean to suggest that reason is essentially a negative authority in systematic theology. It serves to identify and to rule out incoherence and contradiction in the formulation and communication of the ideas in terms of which faith is understood. Where it has no place is in the establishment of faith itself in the first place. The attempt so to use it can only amount to a denial of what faith affirms: the absolute trustworthiness of God alone.

An account must be given of this trustworthiness, but it should take the form of a witness to the meaning which is found from that point of view rather than taking the form of an attempt to vindicate faith by testing it under some

other standard of appeal. An encounter with the Biblical witness to faith is a unique experience which cannot be reduced to something else. Neither can its significance be seen except from the viewpoint of faith.

The common witness of the people of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is proclaimed to faith through the record of Biblical events and response to events. This testimony is spoken to us both from the heights of faith and from the depths of unfaith. Both the shame and the glory of Old and New Israel alike are set within a revelatory perspective in the Bible. Through the eyes of this discerning faith, Israel's very unworthiness and unfaithfulness is made to proclaim God's grace and the hope and joy which is set before those who live and move and have their being in the fear of the Lord, trusting in His utter sufficiency for their every need.

Once a man has heard this gracious Word spoken by God to his inner condition of faith and unfaith through the record of this witness, he finds that the faith which underlies the witness of the Biblical community draws forth his own faith. Faith fills his life with continually unfolding dimensions of meaning and value. Yet this Biblical faith itself witnesses to the fact that the power which constitutes this faith does not reside in those who are in faith, nor in the faith itself, but in the Word of God which is spoken from

faith to faith. Biblical faith is faith in God, not faith in faith.

The Biblical record does not contain everything which is worthwhile knowing, nor even everything which is necessary as a standard for the theological enterprise. The Biblical record of the witness to the object of faith becomes a living witness only when set within the context of a continuing tradition of past and present witness to and intellection of the faith within which the historic Biblical community stood. The understanding of the dimensions of meaning which are opened to the perspective of faith by the revelatory Word of God must be apprehended with the aid of reason and experience.

Yet the Biblical witness to faith remains the center from which the theological enterprise departs and to which it continually returns afresh. Only there is the saving Word of God heard to speak to man with such clarity. There we encounter the witness of faith responding with unparalleled freshness to the enactment of God's salvation in history in the life, death and resurrection of the incarnate Word -- Jesus Christ.

<u>The inseparable relationship of sin and death: a constructive account</u>. The two most searching examinations of the problem of sin in the Bible both understand sin as closely interconnected with the problem of death. The

Epistles of Paul always portray salvation as a redemption from both sin and death. When attention is focused upon one the other is never far away. In the Yahwist's account in Genesis the two are likewise closely related. Death is understood as originating in Adam's disobedience to the commandment of the Lord.

According to the Biblical point of view, the problem of sin resides fundamentally in the character of the relationship between man and God. Man, as a creature, is dependent upon communion with his Creator and obedience to God's will for his individual and corporate existence. But man has become alienated from God. He has rebelled against the beneficent will of God for no good reason, using the lordship which God has given him over creaturely beings in a vain attempt to become Lord over his own destiny. His communication with God is broken, for in his shame and guilt he hides himself from the presence of the Lord. All explanation of how this came about is necessarily undertaken after the fact of sin, and it is able to account for sin only by reference to such forces as man's ambition, pride and anxiety under sin.

Unable to live with the guilt which haunts him, man finds fault with God's dealing with him. He distrusts God's faithfulness toward him, God's power over the foes of his life and the goodness of God's will. The seeds of dis-

trust beget deeper unfaithfulness and further alienation from God as man's separation from the source of his good deprives him of security from the destructive power of natural and moral evil.

The constant companion of the unfaith which separates man from the source and defender of his being is the fear of anihilation. He is beset by an ontological anxiety -- to use categories which Tillich relates to the characteristic Biblical atmosphere of "unconditional concern."[1] In his fear of death, man tries to determine his own fate, and becomes a law unto himself. He transgresses against the Law, which is the will of God for the community. In doing so he threatens the life and welfare of his neighbor. Man becomes alienated from man in alienating himself from God.

The structures of righteousness in the community under the Law are ordered to preserve the life of the community from God's wrath and man's aggression and violence. The covenant under the Law is an order for sin. It restrains the manifestation of sin in violence and injustice.

It also reveals the righteousness which is required of man by the perfect will of God. Obedience to the Law would bring life and salvation. But man lacks the power to fulfill the Law. The Law thus lacks the power to overcome sin. Paul sees this, and also points out that under the con-

1. Paul Tillich, Protestant Era, and Systematic Theology (Chicago, 1951).

dition of sin the imperative form in which the Law is given incites man in his pride to further revolt. Thus not only is the Law unable to avert the descent of the community and the individual to death, but it even serves as an occasion for man's rebellious pride to hasten him in that direction. It convicts him of his guilt and heightens his defensive anxiety. Which ever way man turns, he finds that "the wages of sin is death."[1]

These relationships of man to God, to his fellow man, and to nature are not sequentially ordered in a temporal process. They form a closed circle. Within the circle a man may move now one way and now another. Yet each movement reinforces each other and no direction leads to an avenue of escape from the cycle of sin and death, for all lead away from obedient trust in God. The unfaithfulness of one man toward another calls forth distrust on the part of the other.

Distrust of man by man extends itself continually to distrust of the God to whom the community of men points as its ultimate loyalty. The problem of sin is always a problem of worship. Trust is placed in false gods which mask man's attempts to manipulate his own fate by magic or the exploitation of natural life forces. No one in the human community escapes this process of the begetting of unfaith.

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1. Romans 6:23.

Thus we find sin always present in human life, continually manifesting itself in specific destructive disorders. This is the fact which is expressed in the doctrine of original sin. Without some form of a doctrine of original sin, the whole conception of the problem of sin tends to become moralistic and particularistic. Sin is identified with sins. The root of the problem tends to be confined to the top-soil of moral wrong-doing rather than being seen as a tap-root into the sub-soil of broken relationship with God.

This tendency was present in Finney despite his adherance to a formal doctrine of original sin.[1] Original sin no longer affected the mind and will to the extent of making man unable to know and understand faith before the leap of faith. Finney's radical change in the "inclination of the heart" was closely akin to faith, but the emphasis placed upon knowledge of truth as the key to the change of heart makes it clear that Finney is talking about belief rather than trust. The loss of Edward's sense of immediate personal encounter with and dependence upon God's goodness and power made both faith and sin into shaddows of their former nature.

Human autonomy under the moral law of God. The whole moralistic development, culminating in Gladden, tended

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1. Supra, chap. iii.

to make God into an absentee monarch. This was not as true of Finney as it was of his contemporaries such as Lyman Beecher and later men such as Gladden and Lyman Abbott. But even in Finney, sin was seen as only a moral and not an ontological problem during this life. Only after natural death does the ontological problem come in, in the final Judgment. God then steps back into his direct sovereignty. Even then, however, death hardly enters the picture. Men go on living automatically, in eternal bliss or eternal punishment. Death is identified with natural death. The destruction of the self by degrees while the body yet lives is not often recognized.

Until the body dies it is the moral law which is sovereign. With Gladden this culminated in the rule of righteousness as punishment on earth for moral transgression. God shows men love, which empowers them to obey the natural moral law, and thus be saved. But not only has God's law become natural law, God has also been deprived of His mercy. The only way to get the penalties remitted is to stop disobeying the natural law.[1]

Here is the worst fault of the liberal optimistic view of human nature and sin. It exalts man's goodness and powers of self-transformation beyond anything man can actually come near to achieving except through radical reliance upon the

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1. Supra, chap. viii.

grace of God in faith. At the same time it turns faith into a gnostic apprehension of natural truths and laws, thus undercutting the transforming access to grace which is from God alone.

Life and history eventually bring men up against the great, ultimate problems which threaten their being. They then find themselves without anything with which to meet those problems -- except the vestige of a radical grace which has been left out of account because there seemed no need for it. What begins by catering to man's high opinion of his own abilities, ends by letting him be crushed by forces which he wrongly thinks himself capable of meeting on that basis. This is what grows from the initial capitulation to man's desire for knowledge instead of faith as the basis of salvation and for a certainty which appears surer because it rests upon the familiar instead of the unknown, upon man's powers rather than God's. This, in Finney, Bushnell and Gladden, is an indication of their invasion by a culture-Protestantism.

Bushnell's doctrine of original sin was more adequate than either of the other two. He was correct in seeing the basis for the doctrine in the empirical fact that sin's manifestations are always unaccountably rising anew. His sharing in the same tendencies which showed in Gladden is indicated, however, by his attempt to make original sin a fact which can be recognized by any mind rather than only by the eyes of faith. The particular evils identified may indeed

be agreed upon, but without faith man's pride will not allow him to recognize in them the pattern of entrenched sin.

Bushnell's greatest contribution to this notion and to an understanding of the church and social action was his sense of the deep sharing of men in the totality of one another's lives in community. Social contract theories reflect and enforce the whole cultural drive toward Pelagian moralism, accenting the moral autonomy of the individual. Community is weakened by the presence of such a view in the context to which action must respond.

Bushnell's social emphasis enabled him to account for the contribution of every member to the inclination of society toward both evil and good in community, and for the receiving of such inclinations by each. This is still today a needed insight. A notion of a general will is most helpful in this matter.[1] This should be specified in terms of loving trust as the bond of community. The action of men in distrust begets responses of distrust, and trusting action calls forth trust in response.

Faithful Response to the Word and Life With God in Jesus Christ

From faith to faith. The process of salvation, in my understanding, follows the pattern identified by Paul as the way in which the believer finds unity with Christ

1. See Julian Hartt, "The Christian Faith and Our World," Social Action, XVIII, No. 1 (October, 1951).

and shares in Christ's unity with the Father. In the dying to the old self with the death of Christ and the rising to a reborn self with the resurrection of Christ, a mystical unity of the believer with both the human and the divine in the God-Man is brought about. It is not a confusion of the self with Christ, but a unity in faith which has an ontological dimension.

The believer meets Christ as the Incarnate Word, which calls forth the faith which is necessary in order truly to encounter the Word in Christ. This Word is spoken to faith and for faith. In its revelation the righteousness of God is revealed as both powerful and good in its mercy and love. Faith apprehends God's self-giving in sacrificial love. His offer of forgiveness and of the means of its appropriation takes away man's need for defensive pride before God and his anxiety about his destiny. The believer is freed from this and brought into a new unity with God. His action then partakes of a genuine righteousness which was impossible for him to attain by his own power even when he knew what the Law required.

Righteous and trusting action in dependence upon God becomes a witness to the Word which empowers it. It adds continual confirmation to the faith which has been its point of origin, while at the same time calling forth faith on the part of others in response to this action.

Thus faith rises continually anew from faith. Faith, however, originates as a pure gift, unmerited by any work which man can offer even after he has received the gift. As Luther maintained, man's original breach with God constitutes a debt which he could not repay were he to live a perfect life from here on throughout his life.

Men are affected by the solidity of the community in unfaith, but each man has had his own personal Fall into evil, and has contributed to original sin by his own action in the community. Men thus are responsible for this continuing sub-stratum of sin in the human community. By the time they are able to understand the notion it is always descriptive of their own situation, for they will have been contributors to as well as recipients of this legacy of sin.

The inclusion of children in the process. The root of the matter is faith and unfaith. If the process of salvation turns about this as its fulcrum, the child is excluded from neither sin nor salvation. I recognize that the levels of intellection involved in the process vary with age and mental ability, as in Bushnell's view. Intellection can be an instrument in the process of salvation. Those with greater intellectual ability, however, can share their theological results with the understanding of those less gifted. No human being, including the child, is devoid of sufficient

intellect to enable him to understand the implications of faith to a degree adequate for a genuine life in faith.

Even in the child, bad theology -- at a childhood level of understanding -- can impair faith through emphasis upon basic assumptions implying unfaith. Children are frequently more perceptive of basic assumptions than are adults -- which is why their questions often embarrass the superficially sophisticated. The responsibility for a good theology in religious education is not that of the child but that of the parent, the pastor, the theologian and the religious educator -- in short, of the whole adult Christian community in the church.

The crucial matter for the child's participation in the process of salvation, however, is not the theology which explains and aids it but rather the faith upon which salvation itself turns. This is no more beyond the child's own context than is Bushnell's "religious experience." Faith is experienced, but the term religious experience is one which loses all specific content eventually because it can include anything at all. What is there that can be spoken about which is not experienced in some way?

Faith and unfaith, on the other hand, focus the process of salvation much more specifically, while at the same time locating it in a factor which is of immense importance to childhood life. The child's world is a world of

encounters in faith and distrust from the very first, and his responses revolve about this problem of trust.

Bushnell was right in his contention that the family is the church within which this faith is borne, so far as the young child is concerned, and that the parents are the primary ministry of the Word to the child. Indeed, I find Bushnell's whole concept of Christian nurture satisfactory except at the basic point of its weakness in explicitly relating to faith the grace and the unity of the community which are operative in the process.

Bushnell tried to do justice to the precariousness of faith in continual tension with unfaith, but his effort was weakened by tendencies to refer the stability of Christian life to natural unity -- despite his avowal that it all depends upon supernatural grace. I would contend that the unity of natural communities and of the church is quite as real as Bushnell claimed, but that the unifying factor is not a natural unity. It is rather the loving trust which is called forth by the Word. The Word must be seen by Christians as operative outside the historic community of Christian faith, in this interpretation. This is a necessary presupposition to the whole missionary dimension of the gospel. This does not mean, however, that the church itself is not the central locus of the Word's operation for the Christian, nor that he will lessen his effort to find communion with those

not presently in the historic communions of the church.

Nature and grace. Bushnell's desire to relate grace and nature is a needed emphasis today. The forms of nature have been made vehicles of the communication of faith through symbol and sacrament, by virtue of the Incarnation. Bushnell's method of arguing for this, however, tends to ascribe the power to communicate faith to the processes of nature in the union as well as to the Word itself. The former power he considered necessary to ensure the reliability of the communication of faith over the span of time. He wanted to ground this continuity in God's faithfulness -- but he could not resist reinforcing it with a chain of natural continuity. Here assumptions grounded in unfaith have crept into the system.

In this and in referring the basis of the process of salvation to the natural interconnection of human wills, Bushnell reflects the drift away from the centrality of radical trust in God in precarious faith. His process of salvation included discontinuity, but drove so heavily toward continuity that it is remarkable that he retained as much of a notion of a radical transformation as he did. When it occurs to me to ask Bushnell why continuity is so extremely important, the only answer which I can see is that man is not willing to trust God to bridge the gaps in the human-divine relationship in ways which the human reason

cannot grasp and use as a basis of confidence.

It thus would seem that Bushnell allows the apprehension of rational truth to become a crucial basis for the process of salvation, despite the restraint of this tendency. His difference from Finney and Gladden in this respect is an important one, but it is a matter of degree and not one of kind.

All three of them exhibit the outworking of the Puritan legacy of the divine light of reason in the human mind. It must not be forgotten that N. W. Taylor's will, as a free and self-determining power, was a faculty of the mind. Bushnell altered this faculty psychology to some extent -- but, again, it was a matter of degree. This progressive development of confidence in human reason displayed little sense of the capacity of the mind for obscuring uncomfortable truths through its rationalizing activity. It was a result and a source of the drift toward Pelagian moralism in the conception of religion. The centrality of the radical encounter with the Word in faith disappeared by degrees, as the power of reason and nature was exalted.

The work of Christ in salvation. The Christian Gospel proclaims a salvation which is by the power of the new-creating Word of God, spoken to faith by Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word and propagated from faith to faith. Faith looks ever to its point of origin and its center in the

person and work of Jesus Christ.

The work of Christ is inseparable from his person. In Christ, faith finds a series of mighty acts of God in history for our salvation. The saving acts of God throughout history are all taken up into one unitive act encompassing the life, death and resurrection of the Incarnate Lord. This act is one in which God reveals Himself to us. Our history is illuminated by the power of the enacted Word to draw the rest of history about this act as history's center.

It is also an act which communicates grace. The gracious forgiveness of God which is there enacted overcomes pride and fear and calls forth trust. It is the gift of the possibility of a new life of righteousness which need not be destroyed by death. It is at the same time the gift of the power which realizes this new life. Faith recognizes the self's confrontation by this saving act of God as the turning-point of the self's whole existence.

The uniting of the believer to God in Christ is the central note of a theological interpretation of the work of Christ in salvation. I have already spoken of the unity of the believer with Christ in faith. There have been three main historic lines of interpretation of this unification, or atonement. Finney leaned almost exclusively upon one of them: the ransom theory.

Here the problem of satisfaction of God's righteousness under the Law is central. This is accomplished by the

imputation of man's guilt to Christ and of Christ's righteousness to man. This substitutionary view was increasingly difficult for men to hold in the nineteenth-century because of the increasing insistence upon the accountability of the individual for only his own free moral acts, and upon the impossibility of sharing or transferring guilt. Finney demonstrated his participation in this cultural current by his confining of the atonement to the morality-centered substitutionary theory, despite its conflict with his own individualistic moralism.[1]

A second historic type of theory is that centering in the theme of propitiation through Christ's sacrifice and the offering of his blood. Christ in this way takes the penalty of man's sin in his own person and stands as a priest representing man before God, offering himself as an acceptable sacrifice. Bushnell and Gladden displayed elements of this view in the importance they gave to Christ's suffering on the Cross. This is a relatively weak part of Bushnell's and Gladden's theory of the atonement, and stands primarily for a moral example of self-sacrificing love, which principle man should imitate.

Liberal theories of the atonement have especially stressed the work of Christ as an exemplification of righteousness and love. Despite Bushnell's attempt to go beyond the moral example notion of Christ's role, he was not able to

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1. Supra, chaps. iii, vi.

supply very much additional content to the role of Christ at the crucial point of the collateral propagation of Christ's influence.[1] He never satisfactorily answered the question of how Christ entered the wills of men in Biblical times so that his will might be shared by the children of subsequent ages through its presence in parental wills. If he had done so, he could not have accounted for the sharing of pre-Christian men in the will of Christ in the same way, so he simply dodged the issue. Both Bushnell and Gladden centered the work of Christ heavily in the moral-example notion.[2]

For all three men, therefore, the unification of the believer with Christ tends to be confined to the moral dimension rather than including the ontological as an equally important part. It takes place through obedience to the moral law of God, through Christ's exemplification of this truth about life. The moralistic emphasis increased with the changes each of the three introduced, as the sense of the radical encounter with God in faith diminished. The concentration upon only one theory of the atonement in each case reflects this pattern. All three theories are necessary as interpretive themes if one is to give a full account of the work of Christ in salvation.

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1. Supra, chap. iv.

2. On Gladden, see esp. Supra, chap. viii.

CHAPTER XIII

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH AND STRATEGY FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION

The Idea of the Church

The Process of Salvation and the Church

The conception of the process in which the believer is related to God in salvation provides the basis for the idea of the church. Just as the breach in man's relationship to God in sin has broken his relation to his fellow men in community, so the restoration of his relation to God binds him anew to his neighbors and restores broken community. In man's faithful confrontation of the living Word, Christ lives in his life as the center of its meaning and the purpose of its activity. A man's special role in the community of men, whatever its form may be, thus becomes a holy calling to be a minister of the Word unto his neighbor. This is a new relation to all men, whether in the church or not.

The believer is not bound more to those who are in the church than to those who are not in it so far as he knows. But this relationship takes a special form among those who confess Christ and consciously place themselves within the church. In the ekklesia, the drawing of men to Himself by the Word draws them

to one another. They recognize one another as men whose eyes are fixed upon a common master and who aspire in faith to dedicate their lives to a common service.

The church is thus a special community among communities. Its distinction from the other communities to which its members also belong is given by the common faith of the members and by their common centering of the purpose of their work in the function of worship of and witness to the Lord whose Word is life. In this essential character, the church is the gift of the Word itself, and is constituted by the faith which the Word calls forth.

This is not to say that the Word is not spoken to men in a cultural context which is presupposed by the manner in which the Word is given. I shall maintain below that certain aspects of the nature of the church are relative to variant features of culture and should change from one cultural context to another. But human culture does not vary in respects which would affect this definition of the essence of the church.

A full ecclesiology cannot be elaborated on the basis of a conception of the process of salvation alone. In formulating an ecclesiology the theologian must refer to non-theological theories as well as to theological concepts. Nevertheless, the use of these additional

judgments in an ecclesiological formulation should be guided by the controlling centrality of faithful response to the Word in the functions of worship and witness.

From the above it will be seen that the idea of the church which I offer here centers in the first of the three ideal-types of the church defined at the beginning of this study.[1] The conception of the process of salvation which I have set forth corresponds in essentials to the motifs of that first ideal-type. Some features of the other two types are included in the following description of my idea of the church, but they are oriented about the themes of the first type.

The unity of the church derives from the mutual trust among the members of the church. This faith in one another recognizes that human faith is mixed with unfaithfulness, and that trust of even Christian men means accepting betrayal at times. This risk is accepted because primary trust is not in the faith of men but in the Word of God which calls forth human faith.

The central revelation of the Word to which faith looks is the mighty act of God toward men in Jesus Christ in the midst of history and time. That saving act transcends the limitations of particular time and place to become a living Word now Incarnate in the church and con-

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1. Supra, p. 11.

tinuing to act there. The church was being gathered during Jesus' life on earth, but study of the New Testament seems to indicate clearly that the church as such was not conceived and constituted until after the completion of the full act of God in Christ as a historic event with the resurrection of the Lord. The church from the very first, then, has found itself called into being by an act in the past. To become a living reality, that act had to be reconstructed in the minds of the members of the church. This was at first aided by the memory of eyewitnesses. Yet even then memory alone was not enough, for the deep significance of this act was not understood even by those closest to Jesus until after it was past. This living memory during the apostolic age -- and in subsequent generations, and its record and the record of the acts done in response to it during that age -- provided a datum for the reflective reconstitution of that act as living history. This reflective construction of an internal history of God's act for the salvation of men -- of becoming contemporaneous with Christ, in Kierkegaard's phrase -- is the manner in which the Word continues to be Incarnated in history.[1] It lives, clothed with flesh and blood, in the living past which is contained in each present moment of the church.

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, tr. by Walter Lowrie (New York, 1941).

This living history is taken by the church as its own history -- as the account of where it came from and what, on that basis, it is now.

The present life of the church is the activity of its members in response to the act of the Word which is presented in this internal history of the church. The idea of the church can thus be described by describing the nature of this activity of the church. This activity is an extension of the Incarnation, for the response to God's act in the Incarnation becomes the vehicle through which the Word acts to confront men in the present as it confronted them in the original historic act. In so far as it acts in faith, Christ acts in the acts of the church.

The following description of the activities of the church follows an order which has been found convenient, but has no necessary logic. As with the features of a concept of salvation, these aspects of the life of the church are closely interrelated, and none is complete without the description of the others. Criticisms of the idea of the church as held by Finney, Bushnell and Gladden are developed in the course of the constructive statement.

Traditioning

The church, as a unitive body existing in time, has a history of her own which is a part of world history, as Bushnell maintained.[1] The history of the

1. Supra, chap. vii.

church's past activity and thought is her tradition. History is always being rewritten, and tradition in the church is always in the process of being revised and reformed. The church's act of referring to her history for present guidance is thus one which may be referred to as "traditioning."[1]

What the church seeks in her tradition is an apprehension of the Word, which is given concreteness and form in the faithful activity of the church in the past. Yet these concretions are, in form, relative to the cultural context in which the church was set at the time. The Word which is so embodied is a Word which cannot be held captive by forms in time and space. It forever manifests itself in specific forms only to revolutionize and break them, calling forth creative new forms. Bushnell is right, then, in maintaining that new forms are necessary in new times in order to manifest the same Spirit.

The basic mission of the church is always that of faithful and relevant proclamation of the Word of God to the world by word and deed. The specific role in the culture through which this mission is carried out will vary in form, the variation being a response to both the Word and the cultural context in which the Word is being pro-

1. Daniel Jenkins, Tradition, Freedom and the Spirit (Philadelphia, 1951).

claimed. The variation will not be an arbitrary nor a discontinuous one even though radical changes in the form of activity are sometimes introduced. The forms of the church derive a continuity from the culture, although cultural continuity does not supply continuity to faith itself. This serves to suggest that tradition is always relevant to the present role of the church, while at the same time tradition must always be reformed in the process of relating it to the present.

All three of our nineteenth-century figures understand church tradition as reformable. They freely altered whatever seemed necessary in order to carry out the present mission of the church, including traditional doctrinal formulations. This was necessary and creative, and served to bring men of the time into relevant confrontation with the gospel. Finney's use of common figures of speech which communicated real meaning to his hearers, for instance, is much needed today.

The primary danger to which all three of these men fell prey in their free use of tradition was the loss of the apprehension of the Word and the faith to which the creation of new forms must witness if it is to be of any value. The Word of God must not be confused with the word of man in which it speaks, and human words and forms must be carefully chosen in the light of the Word

which they are to serve. Tradition must be changed, but it must first be respected and understood. Our three men on the other hand often were willing simply to cast it off.

The weakening of their understanding of the Biblical standards and the traditional orthodox standards of faith and theology led to changes which introduced the note of "culture-Protestantism". Even Finney, despite his insistence that the world needs a radical overturning, rejoiced in the fact that the Lord seemed to be converting mostly the better class of people in society.[1] The influence of culture-ideals upon Bushnell and Gladden is, of course, far more obvious.

It is useless simply to demand of men under this tendency that they give more respect to tradition and to doctrinal orthodoxy. The need for this is seen only after a new infusion of faith has occurred, opening the eyes of men to their departure from faith and calling forth a desire to affirm the faith which was expressed in the doctrinal and institutional forms of the church's past. Those forms may then be appreciated as guides for present expression of faith.

When we understand the context in which the his-

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1. Supra, chap. ix.

toric creeds and confessions of the church were first set forth and share the faith which they then expressed, these creeds become safeguards against the lapse of faith to some extent, although no guarantee of the continuance of faith. The heretical formulations against which these regulae fidei were articulated must be understood in order to understand them. When the crucial matter which was at issue is understood, these traditional formulations point to the forms of unfaith beneath heretical expressions which manifest themselves in new guises in every age as temptations which confront authentic faith. The danger to faith which these temptations contain is not easily seen until one looks at the history of Christian doctrine and sees there the kind of Christianity which breeds from such mutations after several generations. Doctrinal tradition thus provides men with access to experience of the outworking of ideas which requires more time to observe than one generation.

While Finney affirmed some of the doctrines of the immediate past, he gave no indication of recognition of older tradition. Only Bushnell explicitly affirmed the value of creeds and confessions, relaying some valuable insights into the traditioning pro-

cess through which they take on contemporary meaning. Yet his touching upon the subject was infrequent, and aimed fundamentally at protest against the retention of past forms rather than at an appreciation of the meaning they can take on. Furthermore, his theory of language deprived them of much of their usefulness.[1] One wonders whether Bushnell's appreciation was not a mediatorial concession to the doctrinally-minded rather than a spontaneous appreciation.

Reading the Scripture

In her tradition the church finds herself confronted with her own past encounters with Christ, and measures her present responses against the past responses of faith. The Bible is a part of the church's tradition. It is a unique part, however, because it contains the record of encounter with the Word in its original freshness and the record of living memory of the historic Incarnation of the Word in Jesus of Nazareth. The church's reference to her tradition thus is first and foremost a reference to Scripture, and then to the rest of her tradition in the light of that portion of it.

The reading of the words of Scripture, in which the Word of God speaks in this specially immediate and direct way to the faith of the believer, should be a con-

1. Supra, chap. iv.

stant and central act of the church. It should be the companion of every other act which men in the church undertake, serving as the basic guide for faith. I shall consider the extent to which Scripture provides a guide and an authority in the determination of the form of the church in my discussion of church-authority below.

Perhaps Bushnell's greatest weakness was the extent to which he had lost the centrality of Scripture as a real operating principle. His recognition of the problem of interpretation is valuable, and can aid the church in guarding against unconscious isogesis of Scriptural texts. Bushnell's own use of Scripture did not consistently measure up to the possibilities provided by this recognition, however. He saw the problem of hermeneutics, but his own standards for that function were grossly inadequate. Religious experience and common sense provided both the path and the bounds. Where the dictates of these standards coincided with responsible exegesis, he often turned up deeply illuminating insights into the Biblical meaning. Where they did not, he fell into allegorizing and obscured the significance of passages.

Finney had the disadvantage of failure to recognize the problem. Yet his holding to the ideal of treat-

ing Scripture as the basic norm for all theology distinctly restrained the looseness of his interpretation. Gladden would have been in Bushnell's position in this matter had it not been for a new development in American theology. In his time the full impact of German historical criticism of the Bible was being felt. Gladden consequently shared in the hermeneutical problems associated with the development of criticism: the adoption of a perspective of provisional skepticism in approaching the Bible, the tendency to moralize the gospel and the corresponding tendency to allegorize any germinal doctrinal concepts which occur in Jesus' own teachings or in the kerygma of the church before the time of the Pauline formulations. Nevertheless, the mere renewal of interest in the Bible and attention to its meaning was a saving grace in Gladden's case. This was especially so because of the great interest in the life of Jesus. However he is first approached, Jesus often breaks down the limitations imposed upon him and refuses to fit the categories of interpretation which are brought to him. The Word broke through to Gladden in fresh ways. We can see this, for instance, in his acceptance of the centrality of the Kingdom of God even though he was unable to accept the apocalyptic forms in which the Kingdom was presented in Jesus words and in the kerygma of the early church.

It may be claimed that historical criticism, in reawakening interest in the Bible, was an important factor

in the later resurgence of appreciation for traditional orthodoxy in contemporary theology. It also has a value in its own right. Historical scholarship has provided much information about the historic setting of the Biblical community. The reconstruction of this context sheds new light upon the intention of words and acts addressed to that context. The process of historical scholarship is one which inevitably relates the historical context of Biblical times to our own present context by the very act of apprehending the one while standing within the other and thinking in its thought-forms. The Bible conveys to us not only an apprehension of Christ through the eyes of faith in him, but also a revelation of the nature of man and of culture as seen from the perspective of faith in Christ and with the aid of his eyes. The presence of the Incarnate Word in the cultural context of the Bible illuminates that context. The relation of that illuminated context to our own -- even imperfectly -- illuminates our context with the light of the same Word. Gladden's great fault was his thinking that anthropology does not depend upon the Bible, and that the Bible's soteriology can be separated from its anthropology. The fact that he misread the latter is an indication that he misread the former as well.

Preaching

Preaching tended to degenerate into mere homiletical moralism as the nineteenth century progressed. I have noted Finney's castigation of that tendency, which he felt was far from uncommon in his times.[1] All three of our men consistently included more than this in their preaching. Yet the tendency to give more attention to moral exhortation grows stronger as we move from each man to the next. Finney's own definition of Christianity as disinterested benevolence, inherited from the Hopkinsians about whom he frequently feigned ignorance, contained the germ of Gladden's purely moral definition of Christianity, and Bushnell is an intermediate link in this chain of development.

Moral instruction has a place in preaching, but the substance of the gospel becomes Pelagian unless moral teaching centers in faith and its witness and worship in response to the Word. It cannot be so centered unless the central aim of the sermon is the proclamation of the gospel itself, tc which aim moral instruction is subordinated. The latter will thus be brought in, as Finney wished, by way of an illustration of the gospel and of the response of faith to the gospel. In that role, however, it is an indispensible part of the relevant proclamation of the Word, for it is by this kind of concretion that the gospel is related to the

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1. Supra, chaps. vi, ix.

context in which the hearer must live and act in response to the Word. The Word itself is not understood until the hearer sees it as speaking to his own situation.

The word of preaching through which the Word of God is to speak must always be tested by the faith of the Biblical community. This is the reason for preaching upon a Scriptural text, or upon a topic which is set in relation to Scripture in the sermon. Finney, Bushnell and Gladden all continued to do this -- although Gladden felt free to depart from the practice when he chose to do so. This discipline itself is no guarantee of the authenticity of the word which is preached, however. There can be no guarantee other than that provided by the preacher's standing within the viewpoint of faith itself. He must rely upon God to call forth in him the faith which is required, and upon his promise that the living Word will speak wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the church in faith. The note of encounter with the Word in faith had become faint in the preaching of our three men despite their use of Scriptural texts in preaching.

Communing With God and With One Another in the Sacraments

In the Reformed tradition preaching is itself a sacrament in a real sense although it not traditionally listed as one. The centrality of the Word makes it inevitable that it should be so. It is a means of grace on a par with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the preaching of the Word should always accompany those two sacraments and form an integral part of their celebration.

The reason for this is one which Bushnell recognized in his theory of language and its application to theology. Forms as such are always ambiguous to the point of meaninglessness until they are interpreted by the spoken word. The speaking of the words of institution provides an anchorage for this interpretive effort, centering it in Scripture and in the central act of God in Christ. But these words are always the same in every context, and they must themselves be interpreted by relating them to special features of the immediate context confronting the communicants. Gladden recognized this in his recommendation that the preparatory sermon relate the Lord's Supper to the work of the church. The trouble with the way in which he did this was in the lack of meaning he gave to the sacrament in the first place.

Central formal features of the sacramental acts themselves, such as the words of institution and the elements themselves, need not be changed with time in order to communicate the same Presence, as it would seem Bushnell ought to say if he were consistent. These central forms are drawn from the character of the act through which the sacraments were instituted by Christ in his own receiving of John's baptism and in the Last Supper. In Jesus' own ministry these acts were more than mere symbols of truths which he wished to communicate. They were acts which formed an integral part of his ministry itself, and of the great, unitive saving act of God encompassing all of Jesus' particular acts as they are recorded. Their meaning as sacraments must be approached through the attempt to understand the meaning which Jesus intended them to convey. The preservation of forms which were integral to the original acts of Christ and which are a part of the common life of men everywhere in all times serves as a structuring tie to the original act and its internal meaning. These forms must not be altered to the extent of eliminating that formal bridge across which the Word may carry the internal meaning in an encounter with the faith of the recipient of the sacrament.

We cannot tell from the New Testament precisely what form or forms were used in the early church. Usually

it does not seem possible to appropriate the values of two different traditional modes of administration by combining meaningful forms from each. Infant baptism, for instance, can hardly be done by immersion. Yet the symbolizing of the believer's dying and rising with Christ in his entrance upon the new life of faith is better accomplished in immersion than in sprinkling. The same may be said about the meaningfulness of partaking of the wine in the Lord's Supper from a common cup as against that of simultaneous partaking from individual cups and the bringing of the elements to the place where the congregation usually sits during the church service.

There is no valid excuse, however, for the unnecessary elimination of some of the physical elements of the sacraments and the substitution of others -- such as the smelling of a fragrant rose instead of the eating of bread and the drinking of wine in the Lord's Supper or the elimination of the water in the washing associated with baptism. By the same token, I concur with the Reformed tradition in the regarding of the Supper as gathered around a Table rather than before an altar. It seems to me that the Last Supper was a common meal of mystical significance rather than primarily an anticipatory celebration of a sacrifice. The recent exegetical work of Prof. Jeremias on the relation of the Last Supper to the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom

of God in the words of Jesus seems to me to add confirmation to that interpretation.[1]

Finney and Gladden did not change these elements of form, but they were guilty of seriously subverting the sacraments by neglecting their meaning and their importance. Finney said practically nothing about them at all. Gladden entirely spiritualized the meaning of the traditional sacraments, and made the fellowship meeting in the church-parlor more of a real means of grace for the increase of faith than the Supper or Baptism. Against that, Bushnell's insistence upon a real and effective communication of grace in the sacraments stands out in a very favorable light, despite his tendency the ground the effectiveness in a natural human unity as well as in the unifying power of the supernatural Word.

Acting With Authority

When the church acts in faith, it has authority from Christ to act in his Name. By acting, I mean to include the acts of speaking and thinking as well as the moving of physical bodies in various ways. This authority rests upon the promise of God to speak His Word wherever men in the church speak by word or deed in faith.

The central locus of this authority of the Word in the church is the Bible. It is this, above all, which provides both the officers and the laity of the church with

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1. Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus tr. by Arnold Ehrhardt (Oxford, 1955).

a direct access to the authority of Christ in the community of faith. Gladden admitted that there must be such direct authority, but he was apparently unable to specify it beyond that simple affirmation with any consistency. He called for a full use of whatever authority his tradition accords to the minister, but he did not employ the full authority which he claimed from his tradition in his own specification of how the minister should deal with those who refuse to cleave to the minimal standards of church membership. He relied instead upon the persuasive power of reason. Scripture was not brought into the picture at all in the discussion of such problems.

Bushnell rightly recognized the need for clear definitions of authority and the use of appropriate forms of power in and by the church because of the continuance of the problem of sin in the church's own life as well as in the world. This authority derived, however, from the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ. It was not structured and controlled by its apprehension through the Scriptures.

Of the three men, Finney exhibited the strongest use of ministerial authority in actuality, despite his emphasis upon mere persuasion. He also took action such as the reprimanding of members who violated the standard of righteousness required in the church, and physical exclusion of the recalcitrant. Because of the lack of explicit examination and definition of authority in the church,

Finney's actual use of his authority became irresponsible at times. The identification of particular acts with sin itself led to an absolutization of his own judgment about particular cases. He gave no suggestion of a process of church-government balancing the pastor's authority with that of the layman in a concern to develop concensus on a broad base as did Bushnell and Gladden. This was actually accomplished to a considerable extent in Finney's case without a theory. Perhaps he did have a theory of church-authority, but if so, the fact that he did not set it forth in his writings is simply another reflection that the church itself had dwindled to the vanishing-point so far as attention to its nature on Finney's part was concerned.

Bushnell rightly recognized that the church must refer to other loci of authority than Scripture alone because of the necessity of some standard of interpretation of the Scripture. This will still be the case even when Scripture is considered the sole <u>final</u> authority for faith. The interpretation of Scripture and the formulation of doctrine always employs a conjunction of reason and experience as an authority. It exercises an essentially negative authority, as I understand it -- in contrast to the view held by Bushnell where reason and experience themselves supply the content of doctrine.

The function of this authority, in my own view, is the identification and rejection of formulations of meaning which are internally incoherent or self-contradictory. This does not mean the elimination of genuine paradox, however, I find Bushnell's assertion that theological language is always paradoxical a valid and meaningful one. The gospel is indeed foolishness to the Greeks, but the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

The attempt to draw the form of the church entirely from the New Testament is foredoomed to failure once one becomes aware of the results of Biblical criticism. There simply is not a full and clear pattern for the church presented in the New Testament unless one is read into it by faulty exegesis. That has the vice of ascribing to the authority of the New Testament what is in fact imported by one's own unexamined presuppositions. A full specification of the form and the role of the church in a particular cultural context must therefore employ reason and experience in order to draw judgments about the character and needs of the culture from the context itself in order that the role of the church may be a relevant response to the Word within its particular context. Similarly judgments about the nature of man and of community must be set in the context

of Biblical assumptions about Creation, Sin and Redemption; but this alone will not provide a full theory of man-in-community without the use of rational reflection upon one's experience in the culture to sort out the possibilities which remain and judge among them.

Another locus of authority is that of tradition, which I have already discussed. It needs to be added that tradition is another very important source of form for the church, although not all traditional forms can be appropriated to good effect by the present church, as we have seen. It is clear that tradition, like reason and experience, is not an independent authority but rather one which must be used in conjunction with other loci of authority.

The overall locus of authority in the church, therefore, may be said to lie suspended among the three authorities which I have specified here. Now one is consulted, and now another. Each of the three provides an indispensible check upon the operation of the other two. Among them, however, the authority of Scripture becomes that from which the determining effort departs in the first instance, and to which it returns for the final verdict after the others have had their say. The Word of God in the Bible is the central authority which faith seeks to hear in the words of the Bible with the aid of tradition and of the conjunction of reason and experience.

The argument for a presbyterial system of church government, I would then suggest, cannot be fully drawn from forms given in the New Testament, although the New Testament provides precedent for this as an alternative among others also indicated there. One must add to this an apprehension of the character of the cultural situation within which the church must minister and the special needs of men in that situation for which the church must be concerned on the basis of its responsible faith. I shall return to the contemporary reasons for presbyterial polity presently, in relation to the problem of a contemporary strategy for Christian social action.

The Church and Strategy for Contemporary Christian Social Action

Christian Action As Responsible Witness in Faith

In the introduction to this study I outlined some problems which I see as associated with the effort to conceive a theology of Christian action in society. I suggested the need for a theological basis undergirding relevant and effective action in society which does not at the same time invite the distortion of the gospel into an indiscriminate religious blessing of whatever goals are held to be good by the standards of the particular culture.[1]

As a constructive suggestion for meeting some of those problems I would now like to suggest an interpretation of the action of the Christian in his society. Christian action, in this interpretation, is faithful witness to and worship of God within the Christian's particular calling. God, whom the Christian worships and to whom he bears witness in his calling, is the God whose Incarnate Word in Jesus Christ calls forth Christian faith. The form of this particular witness and worship is creatively conceived in response to both the Word and the culture, which together constitute the Christian's context in life.

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1. *Supra*, chap. i.

It seems to me that Bushnell provided some very helpful suggestions for such a theology of action and for a social strategy based thereon. His recognition that what the Christian *is* in his ordinary role in society has more impact upon others than what he *says* has particular significance for a contemporary approach to these problems, it seems to me.

The Christian's words are important to this kind of social action, but they should be regarded primarily as interpretations of the nature and the source of the Christian's faith and of the relation of his responsive action to that faith and its object. I would revise Bushnell's interpretation of what the Christian *is* in his role, however. The most important thing is that his life be an embodiment of faith which he does not supply for himself but which is called forth by the Word which confronts him.

This embodied faith differs from Bushnell's "Christian character," which is a complex of settled moral habits. Faith is more precarious and less subject to human calculation than the moral laws of human nature upon which Bushnell tended to depend for his "steady confidence."[1] His interpretation, in so far as it leans in the direction just mentioned, witnesses unconsciously to a lack of trust in God's power to pass the believer

1. *Supra*, chap. iv.

from one moment to the next in faith in ways which are beyond the ability of human reason to comprehend.

If his insight is reinterpreted in terms of the divinely-given continuity of radical trust which is always suspended over the abyss of human unfaith, it speaks a relevant word to contemporary issues of Christian social ethics. Such a revision of Bushnell's theory of social interaction would provide a view something like the "social existentialism" suggested by Richard Niebuhr.[1]

The total pattern of the action of an individual as seen by those close to him in his ordinary context communicates with a peculiar directness the basic assumptions upon which he acts. Those assumptions always involve an oscillation on the part of the Christian between faith and distrust. Yet the persistence and the renewal of faith through the great parentheses in the internal life is a powerful witness to the ultimate dependability of the Word which calls forth this faith.

Man's life is inevitably a witness before his neighbors. His action in relation to them bears witness to his ultimate loyalty, which is to say to that which he worships. If God is ultimate sovereign of a man's cosmos, it is final trust in God to which his action bears testimony.

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1. H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, chap. vii.

If the self is that which receives his ultimate adoration, his action bespeaks that final reliance.

To be sure it is not for us to sit in judgment of the faith of another, for our own unfaith enters into our judgment. We are judged by the judgment which we meet out, and we are found wanting. Nevertheless the unfaith and the little faith which resides in us creates an atmosphere of distrust about us. This distrust has an impact upon those who live with us, even without their conscious recognition and appropriation of it. Faith, on the other hand, has the same kind of impact in the opposite direction. This insight, which is a reinterpretation of Bushnell's Christian nurture, sheds light upon the unconscious effectiveness of the Christian's action in society. For instance, Gladden's spontaneous prophetic response to industrial evils was much more relevant than his theory of how industrial relationships ought to be ordered.

A utilitarian calculus of the effect to be produced upon society is not the primary question to be considered by the witnessing Christian. In so far as he is in faith, the Christian is reconciled to God through the apprehension of God's love and power. Through his relation to God in loving trust, he is bound to love of his neighbor as Christ has loved him. In response to God's forgiving love, he seeks the good of his neighbor by relating himself to his

neighbor in value rather than in disvalue in so far as his context provides possibilities for doing so. This service of the good of the neighbor is a response to his neighbor's need, which confronts him in his context. He seeks also to transform his context, creating new possibilities of service to existing needs.

Bushnell contended that the variation among the different contexts in which Christians act is the basic factor accounting for the different forms taken by responsible Christian action. Finney varied the intensity of his anti-slavery remarks according to the climate of opinion in the places where he spoke, despite his absolute condemnation of the sin of slave-holding. In Finney's case it was certainly not a matter of fear of speaking out boldly. This is in accord with the view which I have suggested above. The example of these men reminds us, however, that such an approach does not eliminate the possibility of falling into a culture-Protestantism.

That will happen very easily unless the nature of the Christian's context is understood to include the gift of the Word and the faith of the community which the Word calls forth as well as the culture. The Word, the culture, ideas, and the responses of others all operate within the context as causal factors through the determin-

ation of action in response to them. If apprehension of the Word and the impact of the faith which it constitutes is missing from a man's context, the culture is what determines his response.

Recognition of the need for a radical transformation of culture always depends upon the stance of radical faith. If the apprehension of that faith is consistently weak or absent, there is nothing which can prevent any type of ethic from becoming a cultural ethic rather than a Christian ethic. Any Christian ethic, must assume the presence of faith, although it should also recognize the presence of unfaith in the Christian, in tension with faith. If the presence of faith is assumed, a contextual ethic has the advantage of avoiding the exclusive reference to teleological patterns of thought and action which seems always to characterize deductive ethics. A full ethical theory ought to be able to recognize the deontological aspects of morality as well. Indeed the deontological note is far more characteristic of Biblical ethics than is the teleological.

Such a contextual ethic as I have suggested will not solve all of the problems of Christian action in society. Indeed the context in which modern social action must be conducted is confusingly complex. The means of communication among men have been extended to the point where claims upon the Christian's services to deep needs confront him from

every quarter of the globe. The needs are far too many to permit them all to be met. He must often choose among them without adequate knowledge of the actual situation and thus no realistic estimate of the actual need. Response cannot remain simply an individual response, for the needs cannot be met in this way.

All of this calls for an organized effort enabling more extensive and responsible action than could be achieved by the uncoordinated action of separate individuals. Yet such action can still be understood as a response appropriate to the individual Christian's context, if the full range of claims which are actually presented to him by his context are recognized. Some men must be called to serve as specialists in the analysis of the various claims presented and thought must be devoted to finding ways of joint response which can meet these needs.

The organized voluntary societies in which Finney took such a part suggest one type of joint action which may be badly needed at times in society.

It is a striking fact that this type of joint effort for social action has almost entirely disappeared over the past twenty years in America. This is a particularly relevant type of channel for joint Christian action responding to needs upon which the members of the church are not in sufficient agreement to permit action as a body.

It should not become a substitute for the attempt to reach agreement in the church upon the nature and extent of social needs, however. This study of the church and social action, particularly in the cases of Gladden and Finney, suggests to me that the sharing of common social concerns and action by men in the church can be a factor which both expresses and strengthens the bond of church unity. It seems to have held churches together in the face of strong tides of individualistic moralism in the culture and in the church in each of these two cases.

The Instrumentality of the Church to Christian Social Action

If the nature of Christian social action is understood as witness and worship in response to the Word and to the human need confronted by the Christian in his context, there would seem to be a legitimacy to one of Gladden's contentions: the church itself should be instrumental to social action. Witness and worship are proper functions of the church as such. The request that the church be concerned in its activity to provide service for Christian social action is thus not a request that she import anything within her walls which is not her own intrinsic concern according to her proper nature.

The provision of certain kinds of service to social action as a part of the church's role is not, in this under-

standing, undertaken merely out of concern for society and not for the church itself. It is also to be done out of concern for making the church's proclamation of the gospel a relevant communication to her members.

The meaning of sin and grace is apprehended as they are seen at work in a context which is the familiar dwelling-place of the Christian. In order that sin and grace may be apprehended in their concreteness, preaching might frequently include some analysis and exposition of basic assumptions which are common in the culture. These illustrations might be drawn from specific current events in the news in which men have attempted to deal with basic issues of social policy, for instance. These basic cultural assumptions may then be compared with the characteristic assumptions of historic Christian faith concerning man, nature, sin, grace, salvation and God as seen through the eyes of faith in Christ. The latter may best be presented by a similar analysis of a Biblical event to show the presuppositions of the account given in the Bible. Historic creeds and confessions might also be useful in identifying these presuppositions and showing their status in the tradition of the church.

If this were done, the Biblical account would be illuminated by being related to the context in which the present-day Christian lives and by the exhibition of the tension between Biblical assumptions and those of the culture

of today. In the same process, the Christian would be made more aware of the character of his culture and its tension with the faith of the Biblical witnesses. The gospel would not be treated as an abstract truth to be deductively applied to the problems of contemporary life. Instead, it would be brought, clothed in its context, into the listener's own context, becoming a part of his own living history.

If preaching is to be made relevant to Christian witness in the face of the issues of social policy which confront men today, some regular opportunity must be given to the layman to argue back. The church must provide discussion situations in which the members can attempt to work out some degree of real concensus in the identification of the most pressing social needs. The Christian may then seek to help in meeting these most urgent needs through his social roles as a voter, a party member, a member of a professional society or a labor union, a member of the P.T.A., and a host of others. Experts might well be brought in to help the church members understand something of the nature and operation of social, economic and political processes as a basis for action which is relevant to the actualities of their social context.

Those who share the same social role might well be brought together to share their mutual problems and insights in witnessing to faith within that particular role in a

modern compartmentalized society. The function of relating people who do not share the same role to one another in a conversation about their problems of witnessing in their respective roles should accompany conversations among those who do share the same role. This would help the church to overcome the divisive problem of lack of communication among its members. Many of the features of the church's social role which I have suggested here are similar to those outlined by Gladden for the working church. They must center in a fuller gospel than that which Gladden retained, however, or they will be of relatively little use to either the life of the church or the life of society.

In the Biblical perspective, God is seen as the God of nations and cultures as well as the God of individual men. The church as a whole may well give thought to its corporate witness to the social body. There is a place for the attempt of official church bodies to study social problems and policy issues, seeking to relate them to the faith of the church and to discern and declare the mind of Christ as seen by that body. Such declarations do not speak only for those who agree with them or who voted for the declaration, nor do they infallibly declare the mind of Christ in the whole church of Jesus Christ.

In so far as the mind of Christ is actually revealed to such a body of men in the church, they speak for Christ

and not for men alone. Yet they must always speak this word in humility regarding their certainty of access to the mind of Christ, realizing that it judges the church as well as the world, and that both must repent.

Here is another reason for the importance of a presbyterial form of church government. The witness of a church body which reaches a significant concensus concerning the mind of Christ should not be silenced because the concensus is not unanimous, or else the church will never manage to witness to a unity in its faith at all except in innocuous or irrelevant responses.

This study adds a measure of confirmation to the notion that a full and effective Christian social strategy requires a view which regards the church as a genuine community having reality as a social body. Conceptions of the process of salvation in which community does not play an essential role are reflected in voluntaristic ideas of the church in which the corporate reality of the church is not recognized. The idea of the church and of the process of salvation so conceived, reveal the assumption that community is not essential to the nature of man. The same assumption about the nature of man and community is reflected in social strategies which rely exclusively upon individual rational argumentation and conscious efforts at moral suasion to produce changes in social structure and values.

This historical study, it seems to me, has indicated the shortcomings of such conceptions.

In the present stage of discussion about the nature of the church there is little agreement about the role of general theories and assumptions about man and society in ecclesiology and church-life. This study adds some weight to the supposition that they do play an important role. A systematic application of the results of sociological research on the processes of community to the problem of the nature of the church should produce significant insights.

It is my conviction, furthermore, that if these insights are directed toward a clarification of the role of the church in society it will be seen that the church, in order to be responsible in its effort to exert an influence in society must provide for its ministers and membership specific programs of the kind suggested above for social education framed in the light of Christian faith.

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